



# THE NOH THEATER

Principles and Perspectives

# NOH



by KUNIO KOMPARU

## THE NOH THEATER



Kunio Komparu

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## PRINCIPLES AND PERSPECTIVES

THEATRE - JAPAN

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NEVER FORGET THE BEGINNER'S MIND.

*Zeami*

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

The Hepburn system, with minor modifications, has been followed in romanizing Japanese words, the chief exception to this rule being the word Noh, which is used instead of Nō, and which also appears in this form in such compounds as Nohgaku, *nohmen*, and the like. Theatrical genres appear in roman with capitals, and Japanese names are given in Japanese style (surname first) only for people who flourished before the Meiji era.

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operation of putting a quiet stillness where we would expect a duration of eloquent dancing—this is the pursuit of expression through *ma*.

Such active use of silence and space is sometimes misunderstood, and people make flowery statements that the ultimate expression in Noh is *mu*, nothingness. They are confusing nothingness with *kū*, emptiness or space.

This expressive technique is not limited to Noh. There has long existed in Japan a tradition of perhaps paradoxical thought; the poet Shinkei (1406–75) said, “In linked verse, put your mind to what is not said,” and the tea master Sen no Rikyū (1520–91), “What is called the tea ceremony is nothing more than boiling water, brewing tea, and drinking it.” The point of their instruction, to put it succinctly, is to do nothing superfluous. Elegance is born when the ordinary is abbreviated, concentrated, and reduced to essentials, and such abbreviating always gives birth to an accompanying symbolism, and this process leads ultimately to *ma*. If we apply this line of thought to the ink paintings of Sesshū, we might say that the unpainted part is what commands the greatest interest.

Zeami’s *senu tokoro*, the places where nothing is done, describe not only the method of Noh acting but also the basic nature of Noh music. The theory is that the body of the music is synthesized of silences that are themselves framed by a pattern of rhythm woven of a minimum of percussion sounds. Again, the interesting part is what is not played, not acted out, not given an apparent reality.

Thus, the defining of Noh as an art of *ma* is a concrete way of saying that Noh is an art of time and space, as we indicate in the title of this chapter. The importance of this should be easy to understand. If *jo-ha-kyū* is the great ordering principle covering every aspect of Noh, then *ma* is the element that determines the character of the art, and upon these two pillars the architecture of Noh is solidly constructed.

## THE FORMS OF PRESENTATION

In Noh, there are two main production techniques: the progress-in-the-present method (*genzai-shinkō-hō*), in which the action moves in a flow of time that is natural and describable in terms of the laws of

physics; and the reflection-in-vision method (*mugen-kaisō-hō*), in which the flow of time within the play is reversed and takes place in a memory of dream. Depending on which mode of presentation is employed, Noh plays can be described as either Phenomenal (*genzai*) Noh or Phantasmal (*mugen*) Noh. This distinction is, however, a modern one that cannot be used to classify every single play; it is employed here because it allows a simple explanation of the characteristics of Noh production that distinguish it from other forms of theater.

**Phenomenal Noh** In this type of Noh, the story is generally based upon the experiences of someone who actually lived in the real world; it is the reappearance of a past based on a very ordinary passage of time. Consequently, because the passage of time in the play coincides with the real passage of time for the audience, this type of story is very easy to understand. This being a form inherited from the Yamato Sarugaku tradition of mimicry of real appearances, representation in Phenomenal Noh is considerably realistic. Although people seem to think that Noh is a kind of drama in which ghosts or demons appear, it also has this other aspect, imitative and dramatic, based on the life of an actual person.

Phenomenal Noh is itself also divided into two systems: the more emotional everyday-life-like Phenomenal Noh and the more theatrical (dramatic) Phenomenal Noh. The more emotional, like the *sewa-mono* of Kabuki, paints an intricate picture of varied and intermingling emotions demonstrating human nature, evokes a resonance effect with the past experiences of the audience, and arouses real sympathy. The more theatrical system revolves around spectacular elements, and, although the story progresses in terms of real present time in which humans as well as demons or angry spirits appear, contains a number of plays in which the dramatic development acts as a power in confrontation with modern man. It is, as it were, an outer drama confronting an inner drama, and it is deeply colored with the feeling of a show that has great popular appeal.

Before proceeding to the discussion of Phantasmal Noh, a brief explanation of the formal system of acts and scenes is in order, for the connotation is quite different from that employed in other forms of theater. Noh plays may be divided into two groups, single-entry



and double-entry plays, depending upon their structure; in theatrical terms, these are equivalent to one-act and two-act plays.

In terms of content, the plays can be divided thus: a one-act play, in which the main character (*shite*) remains on stage for the duration of the play, there is no entr'acte, and the action happens in one place; a quasi-two-act play, in which the location remains the same and the *shite* again remains on stage, there is no entr'acte, and the *shite* changes costume while on stage (*monogi*) and sometimes changes character (nature) as well; and a two-act play, in which the *shite* leaves the stage and changes costume, returning as the same person with the same character, as the same person with a different character, or as a completely different person. In terms of scene, however, the division is one in which the first and second acts may take place at the same scene or in different scenes. This is illustrated clearly in Table 9.

**Table 9. Characteristics Derived from Number of Acts**

one-act	—	<i>shite</i> remains on stage
quasi two-act	—	<i>shite</i> stays on stage, changes costume —
		— same character
		— different character
two-act	—	— <i>shite</i> exits, changes costume, same character
		— <i>shite</i> exits, changes costume, different character
		— <i>shite</i> exits, reenters as completely different being
one-act	—	— one scene (location)
quasi two-act	—	
two-act	—	— one scene (the setting of each act is the same)
		— two scenes (the setting of each act is different)

**Phantasmal Noh** In this style of Noh, the manipulation of time and space go far beyond what is found in conventional drama and

often transcend commonsense: frequent leaps forward and backward through time and space are employed in order to effect the entrance of the *shite* or an advancement of the dramatic action. Time in the play does not always progress in an ordinary, orderly, and proper flow from past to future; rather, the time of right now is interrupted as the situation demands by memories of the past, and this creates a "present" that is viewed as corresponding to our own consciousness of actual time and that carries forward the dramatic action. For example, an incident being recounted in the third person may suddenly shift into the first person; or, within the development of the dramatic reality within the play, through the juxtaposition of a character who has entered another dimension, with a shifted space and a heterogenous time, dramatic techniques are employed that transcend the nature of what is possible. This flexibility of time-space consciousness has been carried into film and video, in which memories are relived through *narratage* (narrative montage); past and present are overlapped and given simultaneous existence through the use of a split screen or cross-cutting; combinations of color and black-and-white scenes are used in a suggestive technique in which the memories (thoughts) of the character are clearly distinguished from the reality of the drama; and flashbacks in time and transmutations in space are given a distinct visual form that is easily perceived and understood by the audience.

Such visual methods of manipulating time and space, however, cannot be employed in Noh, which always follows a stream of consciousness, and in which the remembered past and the actual present are fused into a whole that advances both at the same time. And yet, this is experienced neither as contradictory or disjointed, and this is what gives Noh its special character.

Nearly all Phantasmal Noh are in two acts, with the actor performing in both acts. The development of the typical story follows this pattern:

(1) A traveler (person of the present) pays a visit to a place of historical interest.

(2) A local person (the *shite* in transformation) appears, tells the story connected with the site, and then reveals its real identity by saying, "In truth, I am the ghost of the hero of that tale," and disappears. (This is the *nakairi*, when the *shite* exits.)

(3) Then another local person (of the present) comes along, clarifies and supplements the story in great detail, suggests that the person who disappeared was probably the ghost of that hero in disguise, and exits.

(4) While the traveler is waiting in expectation, the ghost reappears, this time in the form it had in life, and tells of its experiences in the past through singing and dancing.

(5) Finally, as the day dawns, the ghost disappears, and all is seen to have taken place in the traveler's dream.

This mode of presentation gave birth to the pattern of warrior Noh, in which the ghosts of famous warriors who are suffering the tortures of battle in hell are enabled to attain enlightenment, but only through a priest's prayers; and to that of Woman Noh, in which, for the most part, the deep emotions of a woman in love, especially one who yearns for a loved one, are portrayed as reminiscences, intensely abstracted. This mode is successful by virtue of this very process of abstraction, so truly we can say this is the drama of the only living creatures who know the meaning of death.

Clearly, medieval religious sentiments, especially the Buddhist concepts of the transitory nature of this world and the need for faith in the everlasting, played a major role in the creation of this form of presentation, which looks back at life from the vantage of death. Many Westerners often say that for the Japanese, life begins with death; these words give exquisite expression to a fundamental difference in the Western and Japanese views of life and death and even elicit a profound and almost frightening emotion. For Westerners, life begins with birth and ends with death, and while there may be a promise of life everlasting, there is no "feedback" to be had from the world of death to the world of life. In the Japanese classic entitled *Hagakure* (Hidden Among the Leaves), it is written that "Life is found in death," and this implies an aesthetics of death that pursues to the limits a belief in death as the starting point of eternal life and that is beyond comprehension.

In Phantasmal Noh, a dead person comes and goes freely in the space-time of real life, bringing into sharp relief the complexities of human emotions and celebrating the eternal nature of sentiments. Life itself is clearly seen as in a striking closeup, well illuminated by exquisite detail.

Nowadays, Phantasmal Noh are representative of the usually held image of Noh, and the overwhelming majority of plays performed at present are of this mode of production. While Phenomenal Noh has the powerful advantage of a time flow that accords with physical laws and of being easy to comprehend, it has never dominated, and this is a necessary result of a qualitative difference. Phenomenal Noh can never be more than representational, a drama of reenactment based on fact; but Phantasmal Noh is suggestive, a drama of reminiscence based on fantasy that makes the fullest possible use of symbolism, that easily crosses the barriers separating different periods of time, and that is about things that survive through the centuries to move the hearts of audiences.

**Phenomenalistic Phantasmal Noh** Between the two extremes of Phenomenal Noh and Phantasmal Noh is another style called Phenomenalistic Phantasmal Noh that is considered very important in broadening the Noh repertory, for plays of this type incorporate both dramatic realism and fantastic lyricism, opening up new horizons through the skillful blending of such seeming opposites as sanity and madness, time and space, and Phenomenal and Phantasmal Noh techniques.

A representative play of this style is *Kinuta*, which portrays the two sides of life and death of a solitary wife who upheld marital fidelity through the sheer depth and strength of her love for her fickle husband.

A woman in the town of Ashiya in Kyūshū is terribly worried because her husband, who went up to Kyoto on judiciary matters, has been gone for more than three years. A servant girl, Yūgiri, comes with the message that he has promised to return by the end of the year, but she finds that this makes the wife, already exhausted by the waiting, thoroughly dejected. Drawn from this despair by the sound of a someone beating on a fulling block, the wife, entranced, begins to beat on hers with Yūgiri; but, as night falls, the more she beats the greater grows her yearning, and she slips gradually into madness. Then another servant comes, bearing a message that her husband will not be able to return at the end of the year after all. Overwhelmed with disappointment, certain that her husband no longer loves her, she falls deeply ill and soon dies.

The husband, who comes home at long last, is stricken with grief at her death and summons her ghost by twanging a catalpa bow. When the ghost appears she says that she is suffering in hell because of her deluded attachment to love, and she is filled with rancor over her husband's inconstancy; but then, however, through the power of the Lotus Sutra, she attains buddhahood and vanishes. (In Buddhism a soul cannot achieve salvation without recognizing as delusions all attachments to things of this world.)

The play is divided into two acts in which the love of a living person (in the first) and the hate of a ghost (in the second) are conjoined to form a penetrating drama of resentment. Moreover, the author gives the play universality by making the woman and her husband neither historical nor literary figures but anonymous country people: the servant Yūgiri is the only character who has a name. In addition, the play makes use of a splendid compositional device, the insertion of the lively fulling block scene in the first act, which serves to heighten the feeling of tragedy in the second. "The flavor of this Noh may be savored by future generations," wrote Zeami in *Sarugaku Dangi*, showing his confidence in this work; but the excellent content notwithstanding, the use of the pat ending of prayers and salvation seems too sudden and almost gives the feeling of awaking from a dream. Perhaps a coldhearted depiction of the human emotions of love and hate continuing through eternity, of karma from which there is no salvation, would be more effective. Other plays of this type are *Koi no Omoni* and *Aya no Tsuzumi*.

Although this discussion of Phenomenal and Phantasmal Noh may have given the impression that Phenomenal Noh is somewhat inferior, there are certainly some masterpieces in this genre. The representative Phenomenal Noh listed below continue to move and charm audiences, and among them *Yuya* is particularly prized. Indeed, the old expression "daily rice from *Yuya* and *Matsukaze*" shows that this classic, of which we never tire, was revered as highly as one of the greatest Phantasmal Noh. (Just as a note of interest, this brings to mind a related expression "*As utai, Miidera*; as Noh, *Matsukaze*," meaning that the play *Miidera* has an excellent text for simple chant, whereas *Matsukaze* excels in presenting the exquisite flavor of true Noh.) Representative plays of these forms of presentation are described in Table 10.

Table 10. Types of Noh Plays

			(Examples of Plays)
Phenomenal (reality)	theatrical	one-act	<i>Ataka, Yuya</i>
		two-act	<i>Funa Benkei, Dōjō-ji</i>
	emotional	one-act	<i>Shunkan, Sumida-gawa</i>
		two-act	<i>Hachi no Ki, Hanagatami</i>
Phenomenalistic Phantasmal		two-act	<i>Koi no Omoni, Kinuta</i>
Phantasmal (fantasy)		one-act	<i>Saigyō-zakura</i>
		quasi two-act	<i>Matsukaze</i>
		two-act	<i>Takasago</i> (god)
			<i>Oshio</i> (young noble)
			<i>Michimori</i> (warrior general)
			<i>Yugyō Yanagi</i> (old person)
			<i>Izutsu</i> (woman)
			<i>Akogi</i> (man)
			<i>Obasute</i> (old woman)
			<i>Nomori</i> (demon god)

## THE DRAMATIC NATURE OF TIME AND SPACE

In Noh, time and space exist on the stage in a dramatic nature that is not seen in other forms of theater. Ordinarily, the time of events acted out on stage flows in the same order as everyday time, and space is fixed within the reality of visual space. Thus, when there is a change of scene within the course of a play, a shift to another time or place, the curtain is dropped and the set changed. This is an inevitable limitation for most stage plays. In Noh, however, these operations are accomplished quite freely within the stream of the play's action. What makes this possible is that in Noh the scene is set with words and the story developed through narration. Time and space in Noh change only within the consciousness of the audience, and their existence is purely theatrical. Time in Noh appears in many guises: condensed, slipped, vanishing, reversed, or split.

**Condensed Time** We said above that time in Phenomenal Noh flows in the same direction as ordinary time does, in a physically natural way. Rarely do the lengths of the two coincide, however, and in an hour of real time many hours, days, or even months of stage time may pass. A technique of condensing time is used to compensate for the discrepancy or to shorten relatively unimportant processes. In other words, the pace of certain sections of time is accelerated. This also occurs in Phantasmal Noh.

Typically, time is condensed in the introductory part of a play. In a standard production, the *waki* comes on stage, introduces himself, explains why he is here and what his present intentions are, and then starts on a journey. When he arrives at his destination he announces his purpose and then awaits the appearance of the *shite*. This is the form we see in many Noh plays. This process has three *shōdan* (structural units; see Chapter 9): *nanori* (name-saying), *michiyuki* (journey), and *tsuki-zerifu* (arrival lines). In the play *Kakitsubata*, for instance, we find:

*Nanori*: I am a monk traveling around the land on pilgrimage. At this time I am staying in the capital, where I have just finished seeing all the well-known places of historical interest, so now I intend to journey to the east.

*Michiyuki*: I continue to travel day after day and stop at an inn every evening, and the number of places I see grows and grows. After a long journey I have arrived in the land of Mikawa.

*Tsuki-zerifu*: I have traveled in a great hurry and have so soon arrived.

This play is in fact Phantasmal Noh: a priest on a pilgrimage to the east passes through a place famous for irises (*kakitsubata*), where, in a dream by the wayside, he encounters an incarnation of the spirit of the iris flower, but in this section the activities all take place in the present time.

Without moving, the priest has traveled from his present location in Kyoto east to Nagoya, about 200 kilometers away, so such a journey on foot would take seven days and six nights if one could travel thirty kilometers a day. This equals about 150 hours of travel, but on stage only about ten minutes of real time pass. In other words, here, as in time-lapse photography, time is condensed and space flies by like an arrow.



Such a situation in conventional theater would require at least two scenes, with perhaps a third scene in which the actor trudges along as a background of passing scenery rolls by. The assumption, in other words, is that the audience must see with their eyes concrete evidence of a change of scene. Noh, however, is subjective theater, and thus requires none of that kind of objective shared understanding. When the priest says that he is in the capital, the stage space becomes the capital, and when he sings "After a long journey I have arrived in the land of Mikawa," the stage space that until a moment ago was the capital unmistakably becomes Mikawa—in a process that transcends actual visual perception. As we watch, the time is always right now.

In addition to the setting of the scene in the introductory section, time may be condensed in many other places throughout a play. In *Momiji-gari*, for instance, during the scene of a party where people are drinking saké and enjoying the autumn foliage, the chorus sings, "And thus they passed the time," and in one phrase places the party in the past. In *Kantan*, while the extremely luxurious life of the emperor is acted out, the chorus sings, "In this way days and months passed and the seasons changed"—the passing of time is expressed as sung narration. At first it may appear that the passage of time is condensed within words of the chant, but this is not the case. By using the continuative verb (*kono yō ni shite*, or doing this, in this way), the chorus is showing in retrospect that in the real time it required to enact the scene that scene was condensed into a tenth or even a hundredth of the amount of time it occupied historically. Time elapses not during the narration but during the few minutes of the scene of maple viewing or splendid living.

**Slippage of Time** When time is condensed, the situation is described in words. There are also cases in which a great deal of time suddenly passes with no explanation whatsoever. We see this in *Matsukaze*: "As I have never seen the western lands I thought that I would travel now to the west. Is this not a happy thing! Already I seem to have arrived at Suma Bay in the land of Tsu."

This speech is uninterrupted: the priest, who is somewhere in the east, decides to take a trip and in the next moment is already rejoicing, saying that he has arrived at a certain point in the west. In this



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method of development, the travel part of the story has obviously been eliminated. There is no travel, so this is not simply a condensation of time but a slip in time.

This phenomenon is also seen in the *nakairi*, when the main actor exits between the two acts of a Noh. The first act may be daylight, the second suddenly becoming deep night, or the slip in time may be a matter of several months. In stage plays it is usually established that five hours or three months or some definite amount of time has elapsed, but in Noh it is always an indefinite amount of time that elapses, the amount determined by the viewer. This indefinite quality is one of Noh's attractions.

In this sense, the first act of *Kinuta*, outlined above as an example of a blend of present-time Phenomenal Noh and other-time Phantasmal Noh, is of particular interest. If we follow the story in order, on the night Yūgiri returns, the despondent wife beats the fulling block; then a second messenger comes and she dies of disappointment—all this taking place in about one hour. This sequence is somehow unnatural, and from the beginning of the events until the conclusion, an appropriate amount of time must elapse.

It seems unnaturally abrupt for a wife who has waited three years for her husband's return to immediately start beating on the fulling block the very night she receives a message that he will come home at the end of the year, even if we assume that she does it in order to relieve her loneliness. Our natural assumption is that it took several days for her to recover, that time slipped by. And then, did she beat on the block day and night until the second message came? We cannot know, but the correct interpretation seems to be that the fulling block scene represents one page in a life of dreary and empty days and symbolizes the agonizing emotions of intermingled love and resentment. It tells us that she continued to wait for the husband's return, passing the time by doing such things as beating the fulling block, until one day a second messenger arrived with the disappointing news. Again, until that particular day, time slipped by. Then, after just a few minutes more on stage, the wife dies, not of a sudden collapse at the shock of the news but as a result of lingering illness. Again, several days have been allowed to slip by.

As I am sure many people have noticed, Noh is a form of drama in which a story is taken just as it is and given substance on stage.

Thus, in the time of the play, internal continuity is most important, and any external discontinuity that may occur is not considered a great problem.

The two manipulations of time we have described, condensation and slippage, apply more or less to time flowing in the natural order, from past to future. Noh also employs a unique psychological time that is brought about when characters appear that exist in different dimensions.

**Vanishing Time** As we have already seen, the main character in the first act of a complex Phantasmal Noh is almost always the incarnation of something else. Such characters usually reveal their identities just as they vanish, and at that point a very interesting dramatic shift occurs.

The form the ghost assumes in *Yashima* is an old fisherman, and the first act closes as follows:

PRIEST. This is mysterious. For a fisherman you are extremely knowledgeable about this story of the past. Who are you really?

FISHERMAN. Actually I do not know how I should introduce myself . . .

PRIEST. Just as I thought! But your words make me even more anxious to know. Please reveal your identity.

FISHERMAN. It is just now a night in spring, but with the ebbing tide at dawn I must return to the suffering of battle in the underworld, and at that time I will tell you my name. Even if I do not state my name, you should be able to tell who I am, so please wait until then. This floating world is but a dream; do not disturb the dream you dream.

Printed as text this appears to be a conversation between the priest and the fisherman but actually it is all chanted by the priest and the chorus, and the relationship of the lines to the roles disintegrates. This technique of speaking by proxy is also one of the unique characteristics of Noh.

In any case, the fisherman is clearly hinting that he is the ghost of Minamoto no Yoshitsune. At the instant when the fisherman, who has existed as an actual person in the past, reveals that he is an incarnation, the time on stage that so far has been developed as actual events is extinguished in one puff, it vanishes without a trace. The

priest certainly does see the figure of the fisherman, exchange words with him, and hear his tales of olden times, but as soon as he becomes aware of the spirit's true identity, the figure disappears completely and everything returns to its original state. The passage of time is imprecise and memory too is vague. Surely this must have been a daydream, and time, for the traveling priest, must have stopped the moment the incarnation appeared on stage.

This illusory tale, deeply impressed upon the priest's consciousness through this strange experience, is something that actually happened in the past, as we learn from a local man who happens by. The *ai-kyōgen*, who comes on during the *nakairi* in Phantasmal Noh, almost always explains either in narration or through dialogue with the *waki* what took place during the first act. This revival of the vanished time gives reality to the priest's daydream and creates the need for the figure to appear in its true form in the second act. Although the *ai-kyōgen* section is sometimes misunderstood as simply useless repetition, it serves a very important function, for it adds another dimension and gives greater reality to the action of the play.

**Reversed Time** The real figure of Phantasmal Noh is a deity or ghost. A god, by definition, has no past, present, or future, so there is no difficulty in manipulating time freely. Ghosts, however, do have a past. Strictly speaking, a human being who has departed from this world but maintains some kind of attachment becomes a ghost, and at the moment of death such a person loses the future and is fixed into an eternal present. The only time allowed is the past. Thus, the ghost always appears as the figure it was in life and reminisces about the single experience of profound memory that entraps it within the web of delusion.

We might say that a drama of reminiscence acts out the past after the present, and that time must overcome the natural flow and run in reverse. This is not like running a film backwards, not a reverse of cause and effect such that after a fire truck leaves then a roaring fire breaks out. Rather, the stream of time flow from the ghost's past is brought into the present as memory. Let us look again at *Yashima* for a concrete example.

Yoshitsune, who exists temporarily in the present (in the daydream of the priest) as an old fisherman, is, to the priest, a person of

the distant past who then assumes his true form and appears to act out the past in the present. This makes it clear that the time of the past is not simply reversed and made to occur after the present but that the two, past and present, overcome their inherent contradiction to intermingle within the consciousness of the audience, which is flowing at the same time.

Seen in this way, Phantasmal Noh is created from an extremely subtle interrelationship. Events that seemed until the moment of awakening to be real are actually daydreams caused by incarnations, and the ghost that is a true being appears in its past form in a dream, while the traveler sleeps. The person who has the dream (*mu*) and sees the phantom (*gen*) is usually a traveler, a person of the present time, and the audience sees the full story across vast spaces of time.

We might wonder, incidentally, why the incarnation appears before the ghost does. As mentioned earlier, a human being who maintains an attachment to this world even in death becomes a ghost, and that ghost has a need to tell its story and appeal for mercy and understanding. The vengeful ghost has no problem, because its revenge will clearly lead it to the object of its concern, but there is no equivalent channel for other ghosts. Therefore, before a spirit appears in its true form it becomes an incarnation of someone in the present world. From the casual passers-by it encounters it selects one appropriate to its needs. The ghost of a dead person cannot, by definition, appear except to a certain kind of person, so it meets this condition by finding such a person and exchanging a few words, thereby creating a reason to appear in its true form. Also, a ghost can speak to, but cannot converse with, a person in the present world, except in dreams. Thus it frequently happens that the ghost appears in the dream of a traveler.

Time may be reversed in Phenomenal Noh as well. In *Sotoba Komachi* the past suddenly breaks in on the old Komachi's deranged reminiscing. She is possessed by the ghost of the man who died because of her arrogance, temporarily transformed into him, and acts out his memories.

**Split Time** The phenomenon of transformation into a different person by possession is used in Noh to portray the complex consciousness of two different personalities of two different times existing

within one person. The dramatic time is split and revolves around two axes.

In *Makiginu*, a shaman possessed by a god appears on stage. As she reveals the god's will to an imperial envoy through a series of questions and answers, she gradually returns to her normal state, and she offers prayers and dances a sacred dance to the god that she had been. As she prays and dances, the state of possession by the god returns and she again relates various matters of divine will to the envoy, but in the end the god departs and she recovers from the madness caused by dual consciousness. Clearly, the passage of time within the maiden is split into the god's time and the maiden's time, and the story is told as time shifts back and forth between these two axes.

We see split time also in *Futari Shizuka*. A girl is out gathering special herbs for a shrine celebration when an incarnation of Shizuka Gozen appears and says that she would like to have prayers said for the repose of her soul. As the girl is telling this to the shrine priest, suddenly the dead spirit possesses her. The priest recognizes what has happened and, in response to his request, she takes robes from the shrine's repository that had been worn by Shizuka herself in the ancient past, puts them on, and begins to dance. Then the ghost itself suddenly appears in the same dancing costume and together, following each other like light and shadow, they dance the same dance, the two as one, in remembrance of the past. In *Makiginu* there was a mental transformation during which the shrine maiden remained herself, but here the transformation is complete and in addition the possessing ghost also appears in its true form. In this development, time is split into two, and both aspects of time advance simultaneously. One is, to the end, the time of this world, of the herb gatherer, and the other is the time of the ghostly world of Shizuka Gozen, a dancer who lived long ago. If we look at it another way, we could say that this play is a combination of two forms of production with two main characters: one clearly partakes of the nature of Phenomenal Noh and the other, that of Phantasmal Noh.

Just as there are both physical and psychological modes of time, so space has both visual (or real) and noetic (or conceptual) modes. Most people are aware that sets are not used on the Noh stage; all

changes of place must occur within the mind of the viewer. There are tools that help to manipulate space, but they are quite far removed from visual reality.

**Shift of Space** A slip in time during a play is very often accompanied by a jump or shift of space as the scene rapidly changes. This is very common in Phenomenal Noh, and *Hachi no Ki* is a typical example. To review the plot outline of this Noh, consider the story as it develops on stage before and after the *nakairi* as follows: A traveling priest given lodging at the home of Sano no Genzaemon Tsuneyo talks the night away, and then says, "If you should come to Kamakura, please be sure to call on me. I will be of whatever assistance I can," and leaves the stage. Tsuneyo and his wife also exit, for the *nakairi*. As they exit, a warrior of low rank comes rushing on and circles the stage, announcing, "The armies of the Eight States of Kantō are commanded to gather in Kamakura!"—and when he is finished the second act begins. First the regent, Tokiyori, comes on stage with his retainers, then Tsuneyo arrives in battle dress on horseback.

When Tokiyori, as the priest, leaves Tsuneyo's home in what is today the town of Sano in Gumma Prefecture, he returns to Kamakura, a distance of about 120 kilometers, and then issues the order for the armies to gather. Just after he first comes on, when he is introducing himself, he says, "Since the snow is now so deep, I shall return to Kamakura right away and continue my pilgrimage in the spring," so we can assume that he returned straight to Kamakura, without stopping anywhere along the way. Even so, the time that would have elapsed between then and the time in the second act when Tsuneyo, having heard the news and traveled that same distance to Kamakura, must have been several weeks or even months. But the details of that period are all omitted, and with the entrance of the regent the stage space suddenly shifts to Kamakura.

In *Hashi Benkei*, the first act, in which Benkei comes on and announces that he intends to make an evening pilgrimage to a shrine in the Fifth Ward of Kyoto, takes place on Mount Hiei, just north of Kyoto, and the second act, in which he confronts and then vows loyalty to Ushiwaka-maru (the young Yoshitsune), takes place at the Fifth Ward Bridge in Kyoto. Thus, in this Noh there is a time

slip of only a few hours accompanied by a space shift of a short distance.

The *nakairi* of Noh is not an intermission. It is an essential element of the time-space structure of Noh: only with the continuation of the dramatic time can the shift in space occur.

**Oscillating Space** With no curtain hiding the Noh stage, it is not possible by visual means to make characters appear suddenly. For this purpose a technique that might be called a time-lag entrance is sometimes used. In such a case, the stage space oscillates between two realities, changing at a dizzying speed.

In the play *Sumida-gawa*, the boatman comes on stage first and announces that he is prepared to ferry anyone who comes along across the Sumida River. Then a traveler appears and introduces himself, saying, "I am a person from the capital, going to visit an acquaintance in the east." After leaving Kyoto and describing his journey, he sings, "I have now arrived at the ferry dock of the famous Sumida River," and asks the boatman to carry him across. Then along comes the figure of a deranged woman, who says, "I am a woman who has lived many years in this capital, but my only child was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Since I have heard a rumor that he is in the east, I am now setting out for the east, following in his tracks." After wandering about pathetically, she manages to find her way to the Sumida River.

At this point, for the first time in the play, all three characters exist in the same time and space. About twenty minutes have elapsed since the play began. As the standard performance time for this play is about an hour and forty minutes, about one fifth of that has been expended. During that interval the stage space became the riverbank with the appearance of the boatman at the beginning, shifted to the capital twice as time slipped to the past when first the traveler and then the madwoman entered, in stages, and during their journeys time flowed by at a rapid rate until the stage space again became the bank of the Sumida River. In other words, the space oscillated between Tokyo (the east) and Kyoto (the west).

In *Ataka*, the situation is not so complicated. With the appearance of the barrier guard Togashi the stage becomes the checkpoint at Ataka; when Yoshitsune and his party enter, it is the capital (Kyoto),



and they start out on their journey from there, to arrive later in Ataka.

When this technique is used, the audience enters into the main story line at the point when all the characters converge in a single space.

**Flowing Space** A change of scene in Noh is sometimes effected through the temporary use of a vehicle of some kind, such as a boat or carriage. When time is condensed, frequently space flows along with it, as we have already seen. But in all cases, the change is indicated by narration rather than visual evidence. We can be certain of the flow of time, however, when actual props are used.

Let us first look briefly at the plot line of *Yuya*, in which a carriage appears on stage. Yuya, the consort of the lord Taira no Munemori, receives word from her country home that her elderly mother is ill and thus asks for permission to go home; but she is denied this and ordered to accompany the lord on a cherry-blossom-viewing outing instead. Riding in an ox-drawn cart, Munemori and Yuya finally reach their destination, and the flower-viewing party begins. She sings and dances despite the sadness in her heart, but when she compares the falling petals to her ailing mother compassion finally forces Munemori to allow her to go home and she joyfully sets out.

This is a one-act play with two scenes, one at Munemori's garden in the heart of the city and the other at Kiyomizu Temple on the outskirts. The shift of scene is made within the course of the play by the use of the cart. When Munemori gives the order "prepare the ox cart," the prop representing a cart is brought onstage. After Yuya steps into it, a slow procession down the great avenue of the capital begins. They travel through the scenes of a balmy spring day—passing men and women, young and old, all in spring finery; the liveliness and laughter of sightseers enjoying the flowers; the ceiling of blossoms spread across the sky like a cloud—and soon arrive at Kiyomizu Temple. This description is not completely accurate: actually, neither the carriage nor the characters on stage move at all; rather, the space of the surroundings flows past them in a chanted description.

In *Funa Benkei*, a boat is used. To speed the party's escape from Yoritomo's henchmen, Benkei orders that they "set to sea quickly,"

and the boatman hurries off stage and comes right back on carrying the boat property and sets it on the stage. When the members of the party board, the scene that has until now been a boathouse on the beach becomes the sea, and as the boatman sculls, moving the oar back and forth, the surface of the water gradually stretches out behind them and soon they are on the open sea.

Such techniques for making space flow are obviously not used merely to enable the audience to witness the movement of the boat or carriage as observers, but to create the condition in which they occupy that space, moving together with the characters on stage.

**Expanding and Contracting Space** There are many Noh plays in which simple properties representing buildings or other structures are used. When these are placed on the stage, they limit space and give it concrete meaning. In other forms of theater, changing such a realistic scene requires that the prop or set be removed and replaced with another, but in Noh the same prop can be used on two levels, in order to represent discrete amounts of change in the nature or appearance of space. This is an extremely clever method.

In *Kuro-zuka*, a little hut symbolizing a rough hovel standing alone in a field is brought on stage before the play begins. The old woman who lives there makes her entrance hidden inside this. This defines the space of the stage as the moor of Adachigahara. Seeing only one point of light in the dark night, traveling priests follow it to the hovel, and earnestly ask for a night's shelter. They are so persistent that she decides she cannot avoid letting them in, so she opens the door and takes a step outside. At that moment a shift of space occurs. The stage, which until then had been the whole field, suddenly shrinks to become the inside of the hut, and that space is further subdivided as the hut-prop becomes the old woman's bedroom, where her secret lies hidden.

Night deepens, and the old woman, giving her guests a strange command not to look inside the bedroom, goes off to fetch firewood. The servant-priest yields to temptation and peeks—and is shocked by the sight of a mound of corpses. The priests flee, terrified. The stage at once expands, changing back into the field, in preparation for the entrance of the woman in her demonic form, enraged by the defiance of her order.

Through all these events the prop has remained on stage without being moved or changed in any way. Moreover, the contraction and expansion of space are made clear only through the acting, with no explanation given in the narration.

Another example of this spatial manipulation takes place in *Kantan*. In this play, a property symbolizing the palace is used as the sleeping platform in a bedroom. A Chinese youth who has lost his direction in life sets out on a journey to receive the teachings of a high priest who lives in a distant land. On the way he stops at an inn in the town of Kantan. He is urged to take a quick nap while his meal is being prepared, and, borrowing a magic pillow, he is just drifting off to sleep when suddenly someone appears to waken him. It is an imperial envoy dispatched to tell him that he has been appointed emperor. The boy is taken to the palace immediately and installed as emperor, and he spends fifty years in luxury and splendor. One day he gives a party to celebrate his courtiers' presentation to him of the elixir of immortality, and he himself gets caught up in the excitement and begins to dance. While he is dancing, suddenly his whole world vanishes. Upon opening his eyes, he realizes that the innkeeper has roused him from a dream. Dazed by the suddenness of the change, the boy is enlightened to the evanescence of human life, which is no more than a dream, and joyfully returns home.

At the beginning of the play, the state space is the inn. The chorus narrates in chant that the young man muses over the possibility that his stopping at the inn must be due to some karma from his past lives; and that though it is not yet night the young man rests his head upon the magic pillow and sleeps upon the bed platform. Overlapping with this last scene is the entrance of the imperial envoy, who, just as the chanting ends, beats his fan near the pillow and wakens the boy, saying, "Holla! I have something to say to you." This brings to an end the first scene.

The boy named emperor excitedly heads for the palace. This change of scene is the same as those described above for boat and carriage, and the moment they arrive the stage space becomes a sumptuous imperial palace and the bed platform a gorgeous throne. In this second scene, the boy has a dream that covers fifty years, and then that, too, ends, and, as the chorus sings, "All this happened in a dream, all has vanished, as he wakes from the miraculous dream,"

## FOREWORD

Kunio Komparu spent his youth as one of the sons of the head of the Komparu school of *taiko* players developing into a very good performer. Thus it was to my great surprise to hear one day that he was leaving the world of Noh behind in order to pursue a career as a journalist specializing in architecture. I suppose I was partly responsible for this, as I had introduced him to an architect who was a student of mine. Although he was amazingly good at being an architectural critic, I was still astonished that he would leave the Noh world.

The years went by, and then one day I heard that he was making a comeback as a *taiko* player. It was shortly after that that I received a copy of *Noh e no izanai*, but, unfortunately, I was so busy then that I did not have the time to read it. It was only when I was requested to recommend to the Japan Foundation that the book should be published in English that I made a point of carefully reading it.

I was so interested by what I read that I finished the book in one sitting, surprised that it was so well written. The technical aspects of performance and the aesthetics of Zeami are set against each other in such a way that each enhances the understanding of the other, and the book is especially lucid in its explanation of the structure of the Noh stage. The sections on the organization and construction of Noh are explained in such detail that one might think that it contains too much information for mere amateurs, but that is not the case. And the sections on the various actors (such as the *shite* and

the courtiers exit and the youth leaps onto what is again the bed into a sleeping position. Once more the stage is the original inn and the platform that was the throne becomes a bed again. Then, without the slightest pause, the mistress of the inn taps with her fan on the bedpost and says, "Your dinner is ready. Please hurry and get up," and the boy arises. Then the third scene begins with the singing, "The youth has woken from his dream," and ends with the phrase, "his wish fulfilled, he went back home."

In this Noh, the manipulation of space is quite skillful, and the manipulation of time is remarkable as well, for within the development from reality to dream to reality, the dream sequence is a play within a play. Another interesting feature of this play is that it goes beyond the usual pattern of the *waki* being a person of the present and the *shite* appearing within the *waki's* dream; here, the *shite* dreams the dream and the other roles are all characters within that dream.

**Space That Brings the Audience Onstage** In some Noh pieces, the audience takes a role in the play. Of course in an abstract sense, every drama is created by performers and audience together, but in a more specific sense the audience can be used as characters.

An example of this is the scene in *Hachi no Kī* in which the low-ranking warrior comes on and announces a muster of the armies. His location as he circles the stage is not specified, but clearly the audience is involved as the troops of the eight states of the east. Thus, the dramatic space includes the audience, and the spectators are onstage as performers. At this moment, the audience is asked to be both viewer and participant.

This production technique appears most clearly in *Dōjō-ji*, the story of which follows. Long ago a girl fell in love with a priest who had rejected her and fled into the temple Dōjō-ji, where the priests agreed to hide him, lowering the great temple bell over him. The girl followed him, transformed by her passion into a raging serpent, and coiled herself around the bell until the heat of her anger melted it, killing the man. This happened long ago.

When the play begins, there has not been a bell at Dōjō-ji for a long time, and, on the day on which a new one is to be installed with solemn rites, a dancing girl comes along and says that she wants to see the bell. She is denied permission because the high priest,

hoping to keep her away, had ordered that no women were to be allowed within the temple precincts, but she persists with argument and finally is permitted in, on the condition that she dance. She sees her chance and pulls the bell down over her, disappearing inside. The surprised priests of the temple realize that the dancing girl must be the angry ghost of the girl of the legend and they urgently begin to pray. The bell rises and the demon appears, in the form of the serpent. The demon again tries to vent her wrath on the bell but this time is defeated by the power of the holy prayers and sinks into the depths of the Hidaka River.

In this play, the audience is drawn into the events from the very beginning of the play. When the bell is hung over the stage the high priest instructs the temple servants, "Today for a certain reason no women are to be allowed into the temple courtyard." The "certain reason" is, of course, that he fears a reenactment of the incident of ancient times. In other words, at this time the stage is the bell tower and the whole theatre, including the audience seats, becomes the temple precincts. The servants face the audience as they speak. Thus, in this Noh, the members of the audience, like it or not, are made into the pious men and women taking part in the dedication service of the temple bell. Indeed, they watch with bated breath as the illusion they are helping to create develops on stage.

This use of the dramatic nature of time and space is often mistakenly explained as having been developed to compensate for the lack of adequate sets for the Noh stage, but this is not true. Rather, it is based upon the same thorough design principles that were the forerunners of the great variety of abstract modern techniques used in film. In this sense, it is fair to say that Noh is truly a stage drama of moving images.

# KYŌGEN

## The Beginnings of Japanese Comedy

### TRAGEDY AND COMEDY IN COOPERATION

The Noh proper consists of both Noh plays and short, comic plays called Kyōgen. Kyōgen actors also perform *ai-kyōgen* (abbreviated to *ai*) within Noh plays, usually appearing as a local person who retells the story of the play in more colloquial language during the entr'acte. Kyōgen plays are called *hon* (main, true) Kyōgen in order to distinguish them from *ai-kyōgen*; they are also called Noh Kyōgen to distinguish them from Kabuki Kyōgen (where the word simply means a play within the full program).

Noh and Kyōgen have been performed together and have maintained a close, cooperative relationship for centuries, ever since their earliest days as Sarugaku. Even today we see them performed together in one play in *Okina*, in which the dance of Okina is performed by a Noh actor, and that of Sambasō, by a Kyōgen actor. Although the texts of Kyōgen plays were not written down until the sixteenth century, Zeami discusses Kyōgen in his writings; even Heian-period records refer to the comic element of Sarugaku. These two forms of drama constituted of opposite elements, tragic and comic, are mutually necessary: Kyōgen, with its healthy, naturalistic humor closely tied to the life of the common people, and Noh, with its sharp focus upon the true nature of tragedy, achieved by casting off that humor. Each form of drama has its individual characteristics and, performed in

alteration, their combination can provide a program with the ideal dramatic construct of relieving the tension generated by sadness with the release attained through laughter.

It is said that every human being in his daily life stars in a series of tragedies and comedies, and we might say that Kyōgen presents the drama of human life through the filter of laughter. It is a simple thing for an entertainer to make people laugh but it is quite another challenge to construct an entire dramatic art based on humor. The comedy we see in popular media usually consists of short skits with amusing gestures and dialogue with improvisation based on slapstick, but Kyōgen is a form of drama with a unique humor that transcends this limited realm. In plays about clever servants and pompous masters, cowardly husbands and ferocious wives, or pious villagers and hypocritical priests, Kyōgen presents life in miniature, portraying cross-sections of familiar experience that are heartwarming even for modern audiences.

The majority of Kyōgen plays are short, about twenty to thirty minutes in length, and require only two or three actors. The treatment of time is usually quite simple. Events proceed in the present time, and it is rare for a character to look back at the past, as occurs in Noh. Reminiscing about past occurrences can improve and intensify a tragic nature, but humor is built up in the present time. Most Kyōgen plays consist of one act, or with simple "the next morning . . ." transitions between acts. The language of the texts is old-fashioned but colloquial, in contrast to the literary style of Noh texts, and it is usually spoken rather than sung. The movements are refined and deliberate but far more realistic than the abstract movements and dance of Noh. There are Kyōgen songs and dances, but most are performed within plays as a part of the story—at drinking parties, for example. Thus Kyōgen plays, despite their age, are easily understood by modern audiences.

Laughter is a uniquely human action and must be expressed with the face, while sadness or anger can be expressed with the body. Thus, the use of masks in Kyōgen differs from that in Noh. The characters in Kyōgen, masters and servants, husbands and wives, monks, priests, local officials, and the like, do not usually wear masks. The actors express joy, anger, grief, or pleasure with their bare faces. (The use of facial expressions is simple and subtle: the



the courtiers exit and the youth leaps onto what is again the bed into a sleeping position. Once more the stage is the original inn and the platform that was the throne becomes a bed again. Then, without the slightest pause, the mistress of the inn taps with her fan on the bedpost and says, "Your dinner is ready. Please hurry and get up," and the boy arises. Then the third scene begins with the singing, "The youth has woken from his dream," and ends with the phrase, "his wish fulfilled, he went back home."

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alteration, their combination can provide a program with the ideal dramatic construct of relieving the tension generated by sadness with the release attained through laughter.

It is said that every human being in his daily life stars in a series of tragedies and comedies, and we might say that Kyōgen presents the drama of human life through the filter of laughter. It is a simple thing for an entertainer to make people laugh but it is quite another challenge to construct an entire dramatic art based on humor. The comedy we see in popular media usually consists of short skits with amusing gestures and dialogue with improvisation based on slapstick, but Kyōgen is a form of drama with a unique humor that transcends this limited realm. In plays about clever servants and pompous masters, cowardly husbands and ferocious wives, or pious villagers and hypocritical priests, Kyōgen presents life in miniature, portraying cross-sections of familiar experience that are heartwarming even for modern audiences.

The majority of Kyōgen plays are short, about twenty to thirty minutes in length, and require only two or three actors. The treatment of time is usually quite simple. Events proceed in the present time, and it is rare for a character to look back at the past, as occurs in Noh. Reminiscing about past occurrences can improve and intensify a tragic nature, but humor is built up in the present time. Most Kyōgen plays consist of one act, or with simple "the next morning . . ." transitions between acts. The language of the texts is old-fashioned but colloquial, in contrast to the literary style of Noh texts, and it is usually spoken rather than sung. The movements are refined and deliberate but far more realistic than the abstract movements and dance of Noh. There are Kyōgen songs and dances, but most are performed within plays as a part of the story—at drinking parties, for example. Thus Kyōgen plays, despite their age, are easily understood by modern audiences.

Laughter is a uniquely human action and must be expressed with the face, while sadness or anger can be expressed with the body. Thus, the use of masks in Kyōgen differs from that in Noh. The characters in Kyōgen, masters and servants, husbands and wives, monks, priests, local officials, and the like, do not usually wear masks. The actors express joy, anger, grief, or pleasure with their bare faces. (The use of facial expressions is simple and subtle: the

exaggerated frowns, crossed eyes, and heavy make-up of Kabuki are never used in Kyōgen.) Kyōgen masks, of which there are about twenty varieties, are used for very old or ugly characters, gods, demons, animals, or spirits. In Kyōgen, an amused servant may throw his head back and roar with laughter, an angry wife may twist her head back and forth and stamp her foot with rage, a spurned lover may shake with loud sobs: this is just the opposite of the mode of expression in Noh.

The costumes, stage properties, and hand properties used in Kyōgen are similar to those used in Noh, but are often unique. Many of the same types of robes are used (see Chapter 15), but simple costumes of dyed linen are more common than those of silk brocade; Kyōgen plays also require furry animal costumes for horses and foxes, and special costumes for such humorous characters as vegetables, mushrooms, fish, and seaweed. Among the Kyōgen actor's hand props, the fan is the most important. While the fan in Noh is used mostly in dancing, in Kyōgen it is a practical tool used to represent whatever object the character announces it to be. Often its use is combined with vocal sound effects: the actor opens the fan and pours sakè, saying "*dobu-dobu-dobu*" or closes it and busily saws through a hedge, crying "*zuka-zuka-zuka*." Other properties are realistic but of an elegant simplicity appropriate to the Noh stage: a sakè gourd for traveling, a little stuffed badger, an umbrella, farm implements. The larger stage properties (*tsukurimono*) seen in Noh are rarely used in Kyōgen, and space is manipulated mostly through the words and actions of the performers.

The main role in a true Kyōgen, as in Noh, is called the *shite*, but the secondary role is called the *ado* (answerer) and the third, fourth, and fifth characters are called the *ko* (small) *ado*, *tsure* (companion), or *tomo* (friend). Some plays call for a group of actors, the guests at a poetry party, a committee of villagers, or many mushrooms; these are called *tachishū*. (In *ai-kyōgen* there is usually just one character, but if there are two or more, the roles are called *omo* [main] *ai*, *ado ai*, etc.) Although in Kyōgen the *shite* is often the "funny" character—the wily servant or beleaguered husband—and the *ado*, the "straight" character—the humorless master or nagging wife—the relative importance of the roles and the relationship of the characters depends more on the story than on the performers' identification as *shite*

or *ado*. This contrasts with Noh, in which the *waki* almost always comes on first to set the scene and then draw out the *shite*, who dominates the rest of the play. It is not always immediately apparent which Kyōgen character is the *shite*, and, indeed, in modern programs actors are sometimes identified as "first servant" or "the demon" rather than as the *shite* or *ado*. Kyōgen actors, then, must master all the roles in all the plays, as well as the *ai-kyōgen* parts of Noh plays and the dance of Sambasō in *Okina*.

## TYPES OF CHARACTERS AND PLAYS

While the five categories of Noh plays are clearly fixed, there are a number of ways of classifying the 257 different Kyōgen plays performed today. Kyōgen families order the plays by difficulty, with the easiest plays to be learned first. Plays may also be grouped in accordance with the Noh-program construct of five plays, as explained below. However, the most common system of classification is according to the type of story or the main character. The humor of the play comes from the personalities and social positions of the characters and their interaction. Thus the plays can be categorized roughly as follows.

**Daimyo Kyōgen** The hero is an arrogant or foolish feudal lord and the humor derives from his stupidity as he flaunts his ignorance and throws his authority around. The resistance of the common people to the inequity between position and ability is developed in these plays with sarcasm and irony. It is humor by ridicule. In this category are such plays as *Hagi Daimyō* (Bush Clover Daimyo) and *Futari Daimyō* (The Two Daimyo).

**Tarō Kaja Kyōgen** Tarō Kaja is the prototypical Kyōgen hero, the servant of a feudal lord or similar character; he is of quite the same nature as Harlequin in the *Commedia dell'Arte*. Tarō is a common man's name for a first son, and Kaja (crowned person) means that Tarō has undergone a coming-of-age ceremony, in which the master presents him with a kind of crown, gives him a name, and pronounces him an adult. This binds master and servant in a relationship nearly as intimate as that of parent and child. This first servant,

*waki*), the costumes and masks, the chorus and musicians, and how all these are combined are written in so specific a manner as to approach giving away traditional secrets.

In a word, this book is not just a must for amateur admirers of the art of Noh; it is an important tool that should also be used by research specialists and professional Noh actors as well. By reading only this single small volume, the merits of Noh can be understood by anyone, and the pleasures of its appreciation multiplied tenfold.

MICHIO SAKURAMA

*Tokyo*  
*January, 1983*

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*We regret to note that Mr. Sakurama, a distinguished actor of the Komparu School and designated by the Japanese government as a "living national treasure," died on May 27, 1983, at the age of eighty-five.*

often in league with second and sometimes third servants (called Jirō Kaja and Saburo Kaja), criticizes the master freely, tricks him out of *sakè*, sugar, or chestnuts, and contrives to escape from hard work. In turn he is scolded, threatened, and chased off the stage by an angry master at the end of the play.

Just as comic characters in films can move us to laughter and tears with their foolishness as we think of similar experiences of our own, so Tarō Kaja, with his spirit of independence, innocent humor, and transparent schemes, must have been a hero to common people under the feudal system of medieval Japan. Thus, plays in this category are the most numerous, and the foolishness of the trickster in a variety of situations surely provided amusement and entertainment not readily available in other aspects of their lives. We must be careful about interpreting these plays as social protest, however, because Tarō Kaja rarely succeeds; in the end he is usually discovered and scolded. The plays entertain with the fun of his attempt. Among the Tarō Kaja Kyōgen are *Neogyoku* (The Sleeping Singer), *Sūo-Otoshi* (Dropped Suit), *Bōshibari* (Tied to a Pole), in which the master ties up the two servants to keep them out of the *sakè* (Fig. 22), and *Busu*, in which the master tells them a barrel of sugar is poison, but they discover otherwise, eat it up, and then construct an elaborate excuse, hoping to exonerate themselves. These plays are also known as *Shōmyō* (master) Kyōgen.

**Kyōgen about Bridegrooms or Women** These plays derive humor from the social blunders of the awkward new son-in-law or the cowardly conniving of a weak man with a fierce wife. In *Futari-Bakama* (Two in One Pair of Trousers), the groom and his father call on the wife's family, anxious to make a good impression. However, they have only one pair of formal trousers, which they are forced to share. In *Funawatashi Muko* (The Ferryman's Son-in-Law), the new groom sets out with a gift of *sakè* for his new family, only to lose it to the ferryman during a river crossing. The ferryman turns out to be the new father-in-law, and his mortified wife forces him to shave off his beard to save face. In the Woman Kyōgen the *shite* is usually the cowardly husband. By tradition, Kyōgen actors are all men, and in female roles they dress in a woman's kimono and wrap a long strip of white cotton around their heads but make no attempt at





22. *Tarō Kaja and Jirō Kaja (Bōshibari).*

impersonation. They move slightly differently and speak in somewhat gentler tones, but much of the humor in the plays derives from their angry and domineering ways. The only female *shite* in Kyōgen are elderly nuns. In the fierce-wife play *Kamabara*, the husband threatens to commit suicide by cutting open his abdomen (*hara*) with a sickle (*kama*). His wife calls his bluff and departs, and he struggles to carry out his vow. In *Hanago*, a man goes to visit his mistress, Hanago, telling his jealous wife that he will be doing Zen meditation overnight. The wife discovers Tarō Kaja under the meditation hood, takes his place, and listens with great interest and mounting rage when her husband staggers home at dawn and recounts for Tarō Kaja, in a series of songs and dances, the pleasures of the night before, the sadness at parting, and even the unpleasantness of remembering his wife's face.

**Demon and Yamabushi Kyōgen** Frightening demons and powerful mountain priests turn out to be vulnerable, silly, and impotent, and from this surprise the humor derives. In *Setsubun* (The



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**Demon and Yamabushi Kyōgen** Frightening demons and powerful mountain priests turn out to be vulnerable, silly, and impotent, and from this surprise the humor derives. In *Setsubun* (The

Eve of Spring), a demon ardently pursues a lady while her husband is away, only to be tricked out of his magic cape and mallet. In *Kubihiki* (*Neck-Pulling*), a demon tries to marry off his homely little demon daughter to a man. In *Asahina*, the hero dies and goes to hell, where he persuades Emma, the king of hell (Fig. 23), to show him the road to heaven in return for his telling the tale of the battle in which he died. In *yamabushi* plays such as *Kagyū* (*The Snail*) and *Kaki Yamabushi* (*The Yamabushi in the Persimmon Tree*), the *yamabushi* commits some mischief and then uses his magic to disappear.

**Kyōgen about Priests or Blind Men** In plays about priests, seemingly innocent members of the clergy engage in a raucous sutra-chanting contest, such as in *Shūron* (*A Theological Dispute*), or show great zeal and creativity in trying to collect donations for the temple, as in *Fuse Nai Kyō* (*Sutra of No Offering*). Blind men are cruelly teased in plays like *Kiyomizu Zātō*, and *Tsukimi Zātō*. (Another play about blindness, *Kawakami* [described below], is a sensitive treatment of more philosophical questions.)

**Miscellaneous Kyōgen** There are many outstanding plays in this catch-all category, including *Buaku*, about a famous bully, and the great play *Tsuri-gitsune* (*To Catch a Fox*), in which a hunted fox battles with temptation. In *Tōjin-zumo* (Fig. 24), there is a Japanese sumo wrestler at the court of the emperor of China. This wrestler, becoming lonely, begs to be allowed to return to his home; the emperor agrees, but only on the condition that he defeat everyone in the realm, which he does.

There are also a few plays similar in structure to Noh, with instrumental music and a long dance at the end, called *Mai* (dance) Kyōgen, or *Noh-gakari* (*Noh-system*) Kyōgen. The *shite* is usually a humble character, such as the ghost of a poor shakuhachi player in *Rakuami*, or the spirit of a cicada in *Semi*, who tells of his final moments much as warriors relate their final battles in Warrior Noh.

It is often said that "Kyōgen begins with a monkey and ends with a fox." This refers to the training of an actor: most children make their debut as a little monkey in *Utsubo-zaru* (*The Monkey Skin Quiver*) and young men "graduate" with a performance of the long and difficult *Tsuri-gitsune*. Between these two the student must learn

23. *Emma, the king of hell* (Asahina).



24. *A sumo wrestling match before the emperor* (Tōjin-zumo).

many plays with human characters, and this progression from animal to human to animal shows that the actor must progress from innocence to knowledge and then to an innocence that transcends knowledge.

### THREE KINDS OF HUMOR

What sort of humor do we find in Kyōgen? What kind of laughter does it generate? We can identify three types: the hearty chuckle, the derisive laugh, and the wise smile.

Most Kyōgen plays are full of innocent nonsense that makes us burst out laughing. This straightforward humor, engendered by human failings, mistakes, or naiveté, perhaps typifies the sense of humor of the days when Kyōgen was born. It leaves the audience with a happy feeling of well-being. Typical of this humor are the plays *Bōshibari* and *Suō-Otoshi*, and many of the plays with this kind of humor were taken and adapted by Kabuki. We might call it elementary laughter. The laughter of derision is a mocking of ignorant officials, ineffectual priests, greedy bureaucrats, pompous husbands, fierce wives, and cowardly bullies. This we might call intermediate level humor.

The most sophisticated humor, beyond the jolly chuckle or the wit of biting sarcasm, draws the quiet smile of the sage, a state of gentle wisdom and resignation reached only after experiencing the vicissitudes of life. There are not many plays in this most advanced category, but an outstanding example is *Kawakami*. A blind man sets out on a pilgrimage to the Kannon temple in Kawakami, to pray for the return of his sight. He prays, sleeps, and wakes to find he has regained his sight. There is one condition: he must leave his wife. But he jubilantly throws down his cane and hurries home. His wife shares his joy, proclaiming that his once clouded eyes are now clear and dark. When he reveals the condition, she bursts into the usual rage but then repents, certain that the merciful Kannon would not be cruel enough to take his sight away again. They dance in celebration, circling the stage. On the third or fourth turn, he suddenly asks, "Woman, where are you?" After a chilling moment, the two begin to cry, almost comically, and decide that their old way of life together

is the best after all. They go off sadly, the wife leading the husband.

The mainstay of Kyōgen humor is the innocent laugh that human beings, in their natural optimism, look for in their everyday lives. Sometimes Kyōgen humor takes the form of antiestablishment ridicule, and sometimes it attains a philosophical detachment that leads to the smile of enlightenment. Noh and Kyōgen are mutually necessary, as we said above, for full dramatic realization. After the sadness and tension of Noh, the audience needs the refreshing laughter of Kyōgen. Only then can it fully appreciate the next Noh. In the same way, Kyōgen plays, in particular the simple plays with direct humor, seem especially bright and amusing when preceded or followed by the solemnity of Noh. Nevertheless, the more sophisticated Kyōgen, with their philosophical humor, are increasingly appreciated by modern-day lovers of theater for their skillful identification and depiction of aspects of human life familiar to contemporary audiences, albeit in a classical form. There are many all-Kyōgen programs in which the intrinsic dramatic interest of these plays is featured.

The principle of *jo-ha-kyū* in the compilation of a program applies to the Kyōgen as well as to the Noh, as can be seen in Table 11. Certain plays are *waki* (God) Kyōgen, *jo* plays such as *Suehirogari* or *Fuku*

**Table 11. *Jo-Ha-Kyū* in the compilation of a program  
(Noh and Kyōgen)**

KYŌGEN	<i>Jo</i>	<i>Ha</i>	<i>Ha</i>	<i>Kyū</i>
	God Kyōgen	→ Kyōgen	→ Kyōgen	→ Ending Kyōgen
	<i>ai-kyōgen</i>	<i>ai-kyōgen</i>	<i>ai-kyōgen</i>	<i>ai-kyōgen</i>
NOH	<i>Jo</i>	Intro- ductory <i>Ha</i>	Develop- mental <i>Ha</i>	Conclu- sory <i>Ha</i>
	God Noh	→ Warrior Noh	→ Woman Noh	→ Madness Noh
	god	man	woman	lunatic
				→ Ending Noh
				demon

*no Kami* that follow the *waki* Noh and extend the felicitous mood. Lively plays with many characters on stage, such as *Sannin Katawa* or *Kubihiki*, can serve as *kiri* Kyōgen, *kyū* plays that precede the lively *kiri* Noh at the end of a program. All-Kyōgen programs tend to follow this principle of compilation as well.

## **Part Two**

### **ELEMENTS AND PATTERNS**





## PREFACE

This book is the English-language edition of *Noh e no izanai* (published by Tankosha in 1980), in which I attempted to examine Noh with a modern eye and elucidate the nature of that classical Japanese dramatic form. In my capacities as both a Noh performer and an architectural writer, I attempted to cull from the artistic harvest of interactions with wonderful friends made in both of those worlds over the past twenty years—in other words, from analytical notes based on a multifaceted look at Noh—and to present in the book a general outline of the major concepts and elements that I hoped would provide a basic understanding of Noh for people who had never seen it. The scope of the work permitted discussion of only the outermost layers, and I think of it as a preface to a scientific study of Noh.

Scholars and specialists speaking and writing about Noh to date have tended to consider it as literature, focusing on the dramatic texts derived from the classics. This is only one, limited part of the whole, however. Moreover, some aficionados seem to have the mistaken notion that because Noh is symbolic theater of great purity and refinement, its essence can be grasped only by those who have made an extensive study of the texts or who have personally trained in the arts of chant, dance, or instrumental music.

However, Noh is not meant to be comprehended by the intellect. It is theater of the heart, predicated on direct experience through feelings. In order to appreciate Noh, it is not necessary to have a

## THE NOH STAGE

### Symbolic Space

The word "theater" brings to mind a great hall with seating for a thousand spectators, a proscenium arch stage, layers of curtains, complicated lighting equipment, lavish sets, and perhaps an orchestra pit. Recently, in avant-garde experimental theater, many have begun to use more thrust stages, smaller theaters or performance studios, arena theaters, stages without curtains, or theaters with stage and seating on the same level: these are all evidence of the search for a new concept of what a theater should be, caused by dissatisfaction with the traditional separation of performers from audience and a desire for more dynamic forms of production. In experimental theater there is an attempt to draw the audience into the dramatic space and shape the progress of the play in response to audience reactions—an attempt, in other words, to transform the theater from a place of separation to a place of shared experience.

If we consider the Noh theater in this light, it can be seen that for centuries the Noh stage has embodied in both structure and function the principle of creating drama with the intangible participation of the audience. Perhaps coincidentally, the Noh theater fits the new idea of a theater developed by contemporary dramatists. Moreover, it is an architectural space with elements that make it more than a simple platform for performance.

Aspects of daily life are often characterized as either *hare* (bright, open, public, or formal) or *ke* (dark, enclosed, private, or informal).



25. *The Noh stage seen from the front (Ginza Noh Theater, Tokyo).*



26. *The Noh stage seen from the mirror room (Ginza Noh Theater, Tokyo).*

A stage, like a festival site, should be bright and open, but a lowered curtain that obstructs the view of the audience renders it dark and enclosed. The Noh stage (Figs. 25, 26), however, always remains in full view, and the audience is expected to cast off internal ordinariness as well. The Noh stage, as a space of complete openness where a shared experience occurs, permits no separation of self and other, however momentary, by the intrusion of "enclosedness."

The stage is treated with respect and even reverence in a way not seen in other forms of theater. There are good reasons for this, and an understanding of these as well as of the structure of the stage can lead to a greater appreciation of the drama.

### THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF SPACE

**The Roof** The first time most people enter a Noh theater they are struck by the fact that the stage has a roof over it. Why would an indoor stage, with no need for protection from sun or rain, have a roof? There is a historical explanation, of course: the Noh stage was originally an independent structure and was only brought indoors at the end of the nineteenth century. But there are more important reasons than historical precedent for the presence of the roof.

The first reason is that the roof symbolizes the sanctity of the space beneath it. Any roof characterizes the space it covers, and the roof of the Noh stage testifies to its origins in the sacred architecture of shrines (Fig. 27): the roofs of thatch or cypress-bark shingles in the formal hipped-and-gabled style, the semiformal gabled style, or, occasionally, the informal hipped style typify the worship pavilion (*haiden*) or sacred dance pavilion (*kagura-den*) of Shinto shrines. The tea ceremony is usually given indoors, but when it is performed outdoors (in the form called *no-date*), a single large umbrella is erected to signify the special nature of the space beneath it, in which the ceremony takes place, the single pole representing the columns that would support a roof. Similarly, sumo wrestling, a form of entertainment associated with Sarugaku, from which Noh also developed, takes place under a roof suspended over the ring from the ceiling of the arena building. The roof is constructed in the style called *shinmei-zukuri*, generally used to indicate the dwelling of a god.

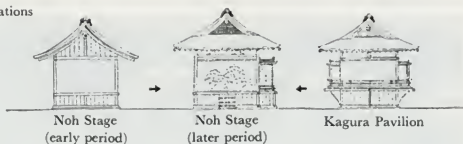
Elevations



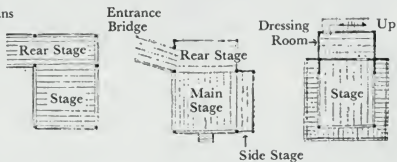
Floor Plans



Elevations



Floor Plans



27. The evolution of the Noh stage from a shrine worship pavilion (hai-den) and sacred dance pavilion (kagura-den).

A second reason for the roof over the Noh stage is that it symbolizes the unity of the theater space. In most traditional Japanese architecture the roof extends far beyond the borders of the chambers to cover one or more layers of surrounding corridors and porches. With lattice shutters that can be raised and walls that can be slid aside or removed, these structures give the feeling that inside and outside are one, evidence perhaps of a wish for unity with nature. The roof of a Noh stage also extends far beyond the edges of the stage itself. This is important because participation of both audience and performers is necessary in the creation of a Noh play, and thus there must be a sense of a single Noh space, made up of the "inner" space of the stage and the "outer" space of the audience. The roof creates this sense and signifies the intent to make the two spaces one.

A third reason for the roof is that it defines the Noh stage as an architectural entity. Traditional Japanese architecture is based on a modular system; the module was the *ken* (the distance from the center of one column to the center of the next in the post-and-lintel structure; it is equal to six *shaku*, about 5.96 feet); proportions were regulated by a method called *kiwari*; building was carried out in accordance with a compass-and-ruler technique called *kikujutsu*. The art of *kiwari* insured proportions that were not only physically sound but also aesthetically pleasing. With this convenient system, a builder was able to determine the dimensions and positions of all columns and crossbeams (and thus, the amount of timber needed for the building) as soon as the floor area was fixed; this area was frequently three square *ken* (about 320 square feet). As the Noh stage is constructed in accordance with this system, and is a beautiful three-dimensional space of a height appropriate to its width and depth, it is only natural that there be a roof to define this space. The ceiling is not a flat surface parallel to the stage but a sloped surface, like an inverted V, that provides good acoustics, with diffuse reflection of the sound. Its visible ridge pole serves a practical as well as structural purpose: it is used for suspending the temple bell prop in the play *Dōjō-ji*. A roof also covers the bridge, of course, and the principles of *kiwari* dictate that the narrower space be covered by a proportionately lower roof supported by proportionately slenderer columns. Again, this indicates the importance of the stage as a distinct structural entity, not merely a decorated platform.

Thus, the roof exists to define the Noh space as sacred, unified, and architecturally discrete. I would also like to mention a traditional building form brought to mind by the structure-within-a-structure configuration of the modern Noh theater, the *saya-dō* (encased hall) or *ōi-dō* (covered hall). In this form, an important building is protected from the elements by another building around it. Perhaps the most famous example is the Golden Hall (Konjiki-dō) at Chūson-ji, a temple in northern Japan. The old outer building was recently replaced with a modern structure of concrete and glass, but it happens that the Golden Hall itself is of the same dimensions as a Noh stage. It is also interesting to note that at the oldest extant Noh stage, an outdoor structure at Nishi Hongan-ji in Kyoto (Fig. 28), the area where the audience sits to watch Noh is a tatami-matted gallery between the wooden porch and the inner chambers of a temple building adjacent to the stage, and that gallery is called *saya-no-ma*, or encasing room. One wonders whether this nomenclature is completely coincidental.

If the *saya-dō* were a design source for the Noh theater (*nohgaku-dō*), this would explain why the word *dō* (hall) is used, rather than *za* (seat or site, as in Kabuki-za) or *gekijō* (the modern word for theater).

**The Pine and Bamboo Paintings** The Noh stage is made completely of unfinished *hinoki*, a Japanese cypress, and the stage has almost no ornamentation. The simplicity serves to heighten the symbolic nature of the space. The poet and novelist Tōson Shimazaki writes about the Noh stage in his *Zuihitsu* (Collected Miscellanies): "On the stage of the Noh theater there are no sets that change with each piece. Neither is there a curtain. There is only a simple panel with a painting of a green pine tree. This creates the impression that anything that could provide any shading has been banished. To break such monotony and make something happen is no easy thing."

These words express vividly the fact that the kind of drama performed in this monotonous space cannot be the usual play made up of a series of events, presented with a variety of sophisticated equipment, and structured around some event. Noh, however, is essentially human-centered, structured around some *one*.

Then why are there paintings of a pine on the back wall of the stage and of bamboo on the side wall at upstage left? Are they merely decorative? Why, specifically, are they of pine and bamboo?





28. The north Noh stage at Nishi Hongan-ji in Kyoto, said to be oldest Noh stage extant. Built during the Tensho era (1573–86), it is a National Treasure. The front faces south, and the stage can be viewed from three sides. The roof over the side stage was added later. The pebble moat is of pure black stones from the Kamo River.

There are two historical explanations for the painting of the pine. One is that it is a vestige of Sarugaku, the forerunner of Noh, which was performed outdoors in the midst of or against a background of pine trees. The other is that it represents the famed Yōgō Pine at the Kasuga Shrine in Nara, where Noh has been performed for centuries. Whichever of these theories may be correct, the important thing is that the pine suggests a merging with nature and indicates the sanctity of the space. At the beginning of a play, the performer sometimes turns his back to the audience to face the pine and sing the opening verses, the *shidai*. This is often explained as a respectful announcement to the god (of the shrine) that the play is about to begin. But why should Noh be performed in this way beneath a tree?

A traveler passing by an open field with a single tree standing in its midst, its branches spread, is likely to be drawn to the tree to take a rest, not simply because the tree provides shelter from sun or rain but because the tree gives shape and substance to the space

around it, gives it the quality of *ma*. As with the umbrella in the outdoor tea ceremony, the trunk represents columns, the leafy branches a roof. Even before the form of Noh stage known to us today was established, a definite, set space (*ma*) was essential for the performance of Noh. So the pine painted at the back of the stage testifies that the stage space is *ma*, and the historical background illustrates all the more that today Noh maintains a unique theatrical space. Formally, the painting is done in the style of the Kanō School or the Shijō School, and sometimes there are stalks of bamboo grass around the trunk. The number of stylized sprays of greenery on the tree were said to indicate the social standing of the owner or the degree of formality of the stage, and it is said that there were some paintings with as many as twenty-three.

Since the early seventeenth century there has been a painting of bamboo on the side panel at upstage left of the Noh stage. The painting is thought to be a reminder of the days when Noh was given outdoors, on the level ground, with live bamboo arranged to demarcate a pathway for entrances and exits, corresponding in function to the *kirido*, a small sliding door in the upstage left corner of the modern stage, used for quick or informal entrances and exits.

I suspect that there is another reason for this painting of bamboo, which half faces the mirror room. Zen Buddhist thought colors many aspects of Noh, and there is a saying expressing the essence of Zen painting: "Paint bamboo. Devote yourself only to painting bamboo, until you become bamboo yourself. Then forget that you are bamboo." This idea corresponds closely to the Noh concept of expression through the double negative (see Chapter 14). Also, when the small curtain at the end of the bridge is lifted and the performer prepares to make his entrance, what first strikes his eye is the image of the bamboo.

There is another saying, one used to describe the stage of enlightenment, that dictates "the willow is green, the blossom is crimson," which we can interpret to mean that we can only be what we are by nature: just as a red flower would not blossom on a willow, so we can never be other than what we are, no matter how we may struggle. Perhaps easier to understand is the saying, "The pine grows twisted, the bamboo grows straight." If we consider enlightenment to be reexamination of this reality and an attainment of a state of mind in which we live as closely as possible to our true state, then perhaps we

can see the paintings of pine and bamboo as symbolic of this ideal. The Noh stage is thus a symbolic space in every sense.

### DIRECTIONAL ORIENTATION

Noh stages were independent outdoor structures, and it was only in 1882 that the first one was built indoors, in Shiba Park in Tokyo. The directional orientation of the stage has always been of great significance, even indoors but especially outdoors.

The Noh stage properly faces south. In the days when possibilities for lighting were restricted, this allowed for maximum penetration of daylight into the performance area, and the sun never shone directly into the faces of the audience. The greater significance of the orientation of the stage, however, is related to performance.

**Four Divine Correspondences** This directional orientation, a way of setting space in an invisible framework, is found in the earliest burial systems and grave mounds and is derived from the Chinese concept of the Four Divine Correspondences (Fig. 29). This is a belief in the existence of the four deities of the four directions: the blue dragon in the east, the red phoenix in the south, the white tiger in the west, and the black tortoise in the south. It is a cosmology with an element of magic, like the mandalas of esoteric Buddhism, which diagram all the Buddhas in their appropriate positions. The orientation itself symbolizes the deity.

In Japan, too, from ancient times, the principle was applied to spatial composition, in the design of cities, castles, and even battlefields. It was also related to seasonal deities and topographical features, as shown in Table 12.

The Heian capital, or Kyoto, was established in 784, and is a typical example of the use of topographical correspondences in urban layout, (Fig. 30), with the Kamo River to the east, the plains of Toba to the south, the great road to Naniwa (Osaka) to the west, and Mount Funaoka to the north. The main gate to the inner city, centered on the south side, was the Shujaku Mon (Red Bird Gate).

The principle of correspondences was also applied to the orientation of houses: a south-facing residence with a hill to the north was con-

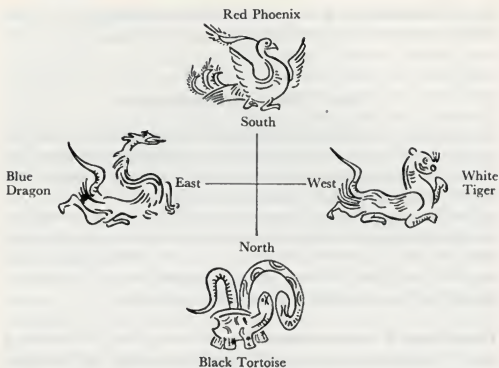
scholar's knowledge or a performer's practical technique. All that are required are the most basic understanding of the play and a delicate and rich sensibility that allows one to take in directly and respond sympathetically to the variety of sentiments of the hero, educated through the medium of dramatic events evolving on the stage. Noh is the very essence of "the Japanese soul."

This book consists of three parts. In the first, I present the characteristics that distinguish Noh as a theater art; in the second, I describe the many elements that comprise this form of drama; and in the third, I explain the structure of the whole and the way the parts are assembled, and offer the complete texts of two plays to illustrate the abstract nature of the structure. The book does not proceed in chronological fashion, so it is not necessary to read it in the order presented. Indeed, I would like to state here that some readers might find it easier to read Parts Two and Three first in order to get a grasp of the elements and structure and then go back to Part One to consider the more abstract historical and conceptual framework.

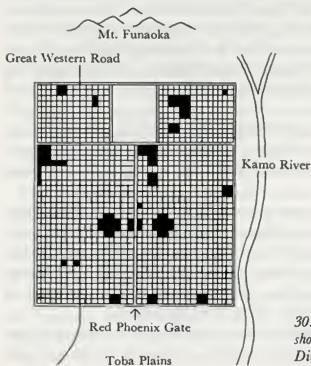
In writing this book, I frequently relied on the fruits of the scholarly research or professional experience of others. I was privileged to receive the guidance and cooperation, in particular, of Professor Yoshichika Uchida of Tokyo University and the Noh performers Mr. Fusao Hōshō, Mr. Shigeyoshi Mori, and Mr. Tōjirō Yamamoto, and to my relatives Mr. Kōtarō Tanaka and Ms. Ōgi Maeda, to whom I offer my profound thanks. For expertly planning the publication of this book and graciously bringing it onto the international stage of cultural exchange, I am deeply grateful to Mr. Takeshi Yamazaki and Ms. Miriam Yamaguchi of Weatherhill. I am also indebted to my editor, Mr. Stephen Comee, for his editorial advice and assistance, for his translating the two plays in Part Three, and for his reworking especially difficult portions of the text. Finally, I would like to say that this book would never have come into existence without the selfless support and cooperation, from the earliest stages through final publication, of my wife, Eiko.

KUNIO KOMPARU

*Tokyo 1983*



29. *The Four Divine Correspondences.*



30. *A rough map of Heian-kyō, showing its adherence to the Four Divine Correspondences.*

Table 12. The Four Divine Correspondences

Cardinal Point	Orientation	Color	Season	Directional Deity	Seasonal Deity	Topographical Feature
East	Left	Blue	Spring	Blue Dragon	Kou-mang (Kōbō) (planting deity)	Flowing water
South	Front	Red	Summer	Red Phoenix	Chu-jung (Shukuyū) (light/fire deity)	Plains, pond
West	Right	White	Autumn	White Tiger	Ju-shou (Jokushū) (harvest deity)	Great road
North	Back	Black	Winter	Black Tortoise	Hsüan-ming (Genmei) (dark/water deity)	Hill or mountain

NOTE: System of correspondences of direction, calendar, deities, colors, and other elements dating back to Han Chinese ritual, incorporated into early Japanese life, city planning, orientation of houses, daily behavior, and seasonal celebrations. Later developed into the Five-Elements Theory, with the addition of the center.

sidered ideal. Records show that when there was no hill to the north, a strand of cypress representing one would be planted. In the *Tales of the Heike* we also see clear evidence of the practice of connecting direction, deity, topographical feature, and even personal orientation in the passage: "It is land corresponding to the four deities, with the blue dragon to the left, the white tiger to the right, the red phoenix ahead [south], and the black tortoise behind [north]." Clearly, people at that time believed that to face the red phoenix (south) was to face front. There are many other instances of this idea. From the principle that the emperor always faces south comes the word "north-facing," which means servant or vassal. A "north-facing warrior" is a guard at the palace, which faces south. In old-style compasses the needle (the hand of a hermit) pointed south. In modern Japanese,



to point south means to lead or guide, and traditional divinatory charts and old weather maps were drawn with the south at the top. The south face or south hall means the front or main room of a house.

This traditional Oriental concept contrasts with the western conception of north as up, seen in compasses, maps, and architectural plans today, even in Japan. Somehow, however, the old idea of facing south seems more natural for inhabitants of the northern hemisphere, reflecting the natural human desire to face toward what is warm, bright, or open.

It is interesting to note that the placement of the sumo wrestling ring (a raised mound of packed earth) follows the Four Divine Correspondences but takes north as front. This is probably in deference to the tradition that the emperor (even at imperial command performances) must face south, but the south side of the ring is called not the "back" but the "other front." The hanging tassels of four colors that define the sumo space are colored according to the guardian deity for each direction. Sumo experts say these also represent the four seasons.

**The Western Paradise** In addition to combining the natural lighting advantages of facing south and the principle of the Four Divine Correspondences, the orientation of the Noh stage also incorporates and puts to practical use the Western Paradise, a Pure Land Buddhist concept that takes the western direction itself as a space. This idea derives from a prophecy that Buddhism would gradually spread to the east; this in turn gave rise to the idea that we exist in the east and worship the Buddha in the distant west. One manifestation of this is the fact that while most temples face south, those built from the Heian period on included a gate in the western wall. The Pure Land is sacred territory, paradise, the other world. The bridge of the Noh stage, situated to the west of the main stage, can be seen as the bridge of dreams that links this world (the stage) to the other world (the mirror room) and the five-colored curtain between the bridge and mirror room as a symbol of unbounded nature (earth, water, fire, wind, and air) separating the two of worlds in accordance with the Five-Elements Theory.

There are, however, a few Noh stages that face north. This is thought to be either because of topographical conditions or in def-

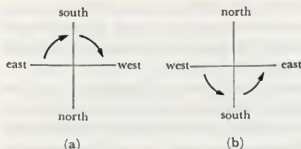
erence to the royalty of the time—performers should not presume to force the emperor to face north in order to watch them. When a stage faces north, the painting of the pine on the back wall is usually painted as though viewed in reverse.

Nowadays, indoor Noh stages, which are artificially lit, can face any direction and be used for performance at any time of the day or evening, but the convention of front as south is still respected. The four columns originally necessary to support the roof have come to symbolize orientation, and movements on stage take on different meanings as the actor faces in different directions. Originally, it was proper for the performer to face the mirror room and assume a praying posture when the phrase “worshiping the Buddha of the west” was sung, although today emphasis and interpretation differs within the schools of Noh and dance postures do not consistently coincide with references to direction.

**As Above, So Below** The orientation of the Noh stage is closely linked to the way plays are designed and performed, as we have discussed, and there is one more way of seeing this. In Japan, one thinks of the points of the compass in the order east, south, west, north—this comes from the motion of the heavens around the earth in the northern hemisphere (Fig. 31). The Chinese traditionally called such rightward (clockwise) turning the movement of heaven (a), in which the sun rises in the east, reaches its zenith in the south, and sets in the west; and leftward (counterclockwise) turning the movement of earth (b), and this does happen to be the direction of the earth’s rotation. Of course, the earth rotates from west to east upon a north-south axis, so Figure 31b may seem contradictory, but in the northern hemisphere centrifugal force does cause violent storms to rotate to the left (counterclockwise).

How does this apply to Noh? The Noh stage faces south and thus receives daylight from the east, the south, and then the west, as in Figure 31a. The performers enter from the west, move to the south, and then to the east, as in Figure 31b. In the dances, circlings to the left predominate. The dancer is more likely to spin to the left as well, and there are fewer turnings to the right except when pairs of dancers dance together in mirror image. This signifies that the plays are designed in such a way that man is made an intermediary between



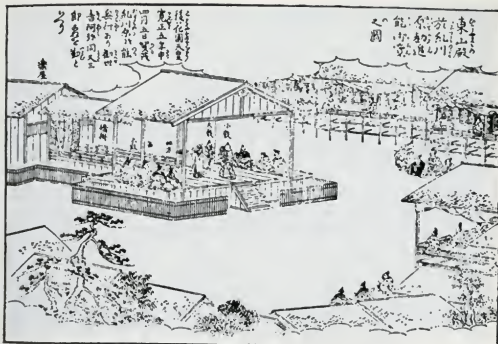


31. As above, so below: The movement of the sun and the heavens (a) and the rotational direction of the earth (b).

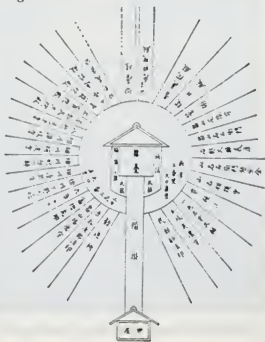
the movement of heaven and the movement of earth. We might even consider it an example of a deliberate *ten-chi-jin* (heaven-earth-man) composition.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRIDGE

Most Noh stages today have a bridge adjoining the stage diagonally at upstage right, in what is called *migi-gamae*, but in the past there were stages with bridges adjoining at upstage left (*hidari-gamae*) or at the center back (*ushiro-gamae*). The *ushiro-gamae*, in particular, was used with the stages temporarily erected for the large, public series of fund-raising performances called *kanjin* (subscription) Noh (Fig. 33). The audience would be seated around about 300 degrees of the stage, in a kind of theater-in-the round (Fig. 34). This configuration must have heightened the sense that the characters came from the other world and allowed the strong expression of a feeling of unity between stage and seating. There is also a stage with two bridges (*ryō-gamae*) and two dressing rooms in a shrine in the village of Kurokawa, in the snow country of Yamagata Prefecture. Every February, as part of the lunar New Year festival, two groups of villagers perform Noh simultaneously throughout the night at two large farmhouses and then at dawn process back to the shrine, where they perform *Okina* and a number of Noh and Kyōgen alternately, one group entering and exiting from the left bridge and the other from the right. This has been identified as a vestige of the V-shaped bridge that was used by the Hon-za and Shin-za troupes of Dengaku Noh during the Jōwa era (1345-49).



32. Subscription Noh. Print of a fund-raising performance of Noh held on the banks of the Kamo River in 1465. (From Man'yōshū Senshūroku.) The stage is open on four sides and the bridge joins at the back center. There are side stages (waki za) on both left and right, with the waki, shoulder drum, and hip drum on stage left and the chorus, flute, and stick drum on stage right.

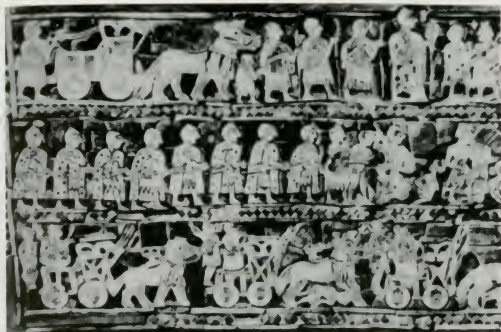


33. Subscription Noh. Plans of stage and seating for subscribers at a performance including Okina on the third day of the New Year. (From Gunshoruijū.) The bridge links the back of the stage to the dressing room. The waki, flute, and shoulder and hip drums are on the left side stage, the stick drum and chorus on the right.

**Bridge and Path** A bridge is basically a structure that connects spaces that are part of the same region visually but are divided by a river, valley, or the like. A bridge also symbolizes the nature of the spaces. A structure that connects two spaces on different levels is a stairway, not a path. The structure that connects the stage and the mirror room, which are on the same level but, we discover, in different dimensions, must be a bridge, not a path or a stairway. The original meaning of the word for the bridge on the Noh stage, *hashigakari*, is "suspension bridge"—that is, something aerial. Thus, the emphasis is more on the time-transcending journeys between this world and the other world of ghosts and spirits than on the daily comings-and-goings of real human beings. In contrast, the *hanamichi* of Kabuki, an elevated walkway that runs from the front of the stage through the audience, is literally a path (*michi*), which shows that the two spaces that it connects are of the same dimension. In this sense it is quite different in concept from the bridge of the Noh stage. The word *hanamichi* is now written with the character for flower (*hana*) but the original meaning was tip or gratuity (also pronounced *hana*), and the early *hanamichi* was indeed a path used by patrons in order to make their way through the crowds to bestow gifts on favored performers. Later it came to be used as a performance space, as an extension of the stage, and for particularly dramatic entrances and exits.

**The Effect of the Profile** Human beings often receive a more vivid impression when they see something from the side than when they see it straight on. Conscious of this or not, creators of relief murals in ancient times almost always depicted the human figures in profile (Fig. 34) and indeed we find the images quite striking. In pictures of groups, in particular, this technique gives the images a direction from which a story can be constructed, somewhat like a comic strip.

The Noh bridge is what architects call a "process space," in that performers use it for entrances and exits, but it is also a part of the stage. Performers tend to move in circular patterns on the square main stage and in a straight line on the bridge, coming or going in the linear space, so that we usually see them in profile. The entrance of a character is such an important element in the structure of a play that it is accompanied by music, and it serves not only to underscore



34. *A Mesopotamian relief showing soldiers in profile.*



35. *The mac-jite of Aya no Tsuzumi in profile on the hashigakari.*

the performer's actions on the main stage but also, by presenting the actor in profile for a period of time (Fig. 35), to create a strong image of the character in the mind of the audience and to dispel any feeling of unfamiliarity. It is the time for wordless self-introduction, the space for the encounter with the main character. The character leaves an even stronger impression in exiting—this time conveying a feeling of farewell when disappearing behind the curtain. Perhaps this dramatic effect was created accidentally, but if it is intentional, dramatists of ancient times certainly had great foresight in the calculation of its psychological impact.

### THE MIRROR ROOM: SPACE OF TRANSFORMATION

At the far end of the bridge, marked off by a hanging curtain, is the space called the mirror room (*kagami no ma*). Here the actor, already dressed in many layers of robes and a wig, puts on the mask and sits before a large mirror to study the figure he makes; this is where he undergoes the process of becoming the character. This space is sometimes said to be called the mirror room because there is a mirror there, but the space is not defined or governed by the physical object, any more than the living room of a Japanese house is called the tea room (*cha no ma*) because tea is kept there. Rather, friends and family gather and converse there as tea is made, served, and drunk: the space is named not for the object but for the activity engendered by or related to the object. The element *ma* means not only room but *ma*, space as an entity, as was discussed earlier. A certain operation by the performer, who uses the mirror as a medium, is what gives the space life and purpose, invoking an important psychic element related to spiritual possession. Consider, then, the magicality and the interrelationship of human being and mirror, which has an importance that far transcends its physical functions.

The Japanese word *kagami* meant god (*kami*), one's own consciousness, or an absolutely smooth surface. This meaning is seen in such everyday expressions as *kagami ni terasu* (see the truth in a mirror), or *kagami ita* (smooth wooden panel). The meaning of the word evolved over time, and because a mirror reflects a perfect if reversed image, *kagami* came to signify official, upright, or true. It also meant

a history, as in the *Azuma Kagami* (Mirror of the East), a record of the years 1180–1266, or the *Masu Kagami* (Mirror of Increase), which covered 1180–1333. We call these histories even though they included considerable interpretation and commentary.

Later, however, the sense of the mirror as a metaphor for a person's essential way of being was revived and the intimate relationship made systematic. In other words, a human being's awareness of self begins with the awareness that the image of oneself in the mirror is one with the self, and progresses to an awareness that the image in the mirror is symmetrically reversed and also reduced in size, growing larger as one comes closer to the mirror and smaller as one moves away. The idea is that only by recognizing this image as someone else, an other, can one see therein one's hidden interior externalized.

The transformation of the performer in Noh—that is, the process of recognizing the other as the self—is here shown turned inside out. The actor awakens the awareness of himself as other and then goes a step further to develop this awareness into a consciousness of that other (the character) as himself. This transformation is the magic of recognizing on two levels the externalized self. The mirror in the mirror room is not there for the actor's last-minute grooming: using the mirror as an instrument of transformation brings life to and function to a space, and thus the true meaning of the term *kagami no ma* is *kagami*-space, a place of god, of self and other, of reflection, and of truth.

Perhaps we could say the same about the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. This long narrow room was a center of political activity in its day; it was necessary that what occurred there be sincere, true, and public, and the mirrors symbolized this commitment.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SPATIAL UNITS

The Noh theater is laid out as shown in the accompanying diagrams. (Note that there is no backstage, wings, substage, orchestra pit, or drop curtain.) Its elements, which can be either grouped in descending order or according to function, are discussed in detail in order to clarify their purpose (Table 13).



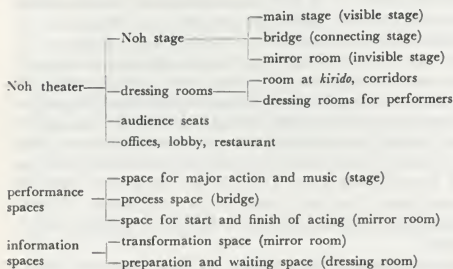
## INTRODUCTION

### INVITATION TO THE NOH

Noh is the classical stage art of Japan, developed from a variety of sacred rituals and festival entertainment arts and brought to a state of refinement and maturity during the Muromachi period (1336–1568). The form of the Noh drama that we know today has a history of about six centuries. The chanted and danced Noh plays, which often have tragic or spiritual themes, are performed alternately with Kyōgen plays, which are lighter, often comic, and composed mostly of dialogue. Noh and Kyōgen taken together are known as Nohgaku (accomplished entertainment). The texts of Noh, which serve as scripts for the plays and are also read and sung for their beauty as literature, are called *yōkyoku*.

Noh is sometimes misunderstood as being little more than a frozen tradition, or, even worse, as being of worth merely because it is ancient. But to have endured down through the centuries the Noh art form must have had an original, intrinsic value that has survived an unceasing process of refinement as successive generations inherited the art, poured the best of their wisdom and techniques into it, and then passed it on. An art that is not kept alive through these rigors can exist in our day only as a museum piece or a curio, its past glory severed from the present by time.

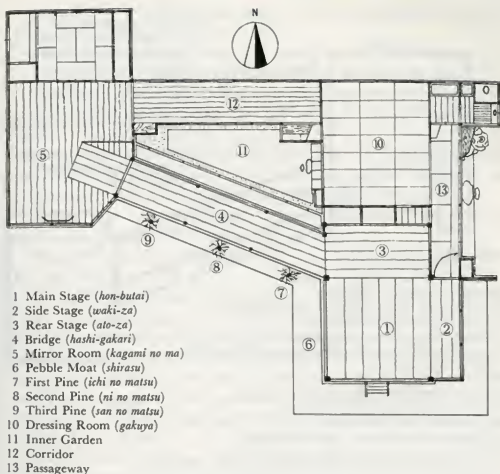
Fortunately, Noh has come down to us vibrantly alive, and, if

**Table 13. The Noh Theater: Spatial Units and Functional Units**

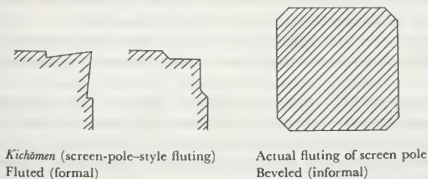
**The Noh Stage** The term “Noh stage” (*noh butai*) is used to refer to the stage, bridge, and mirror room, and the word “stage” (*butai*) to refer collectively to the square area of the main stage (*hon butai*), the side stage (*waki-za*), and the rear stage (*ato-za*). Noh stages today are built in accordance with a code established in the Edo period, the “Tokugawa Government Noh Stage Design Standards,” which specified the dimensions of each part, as well as the structure, construction method, materials, ornamentation, and other details (Fig. 36).

**THE MAIN STAGE** The main stage or stage proper (*hon butai*) is a three-dimensional solid space framed by a roof and four pillars twenty to thirty centimeters (about one foot) square, with a standard floor area of three square *ken* (about 320 square feet). The cross beams are about twelve feet from the floor and the ridgepole is about twenty-one feet from the floor. As Figure 37 shows, the pillars are not completely square but are finished with fluted corners (formal style) or simple beveled corners (abbreviated style). The floor is about three feet above the ground and the floor boards run from front to back, with a horizontal border piece (*koshi-nageshi*). The base is made of verticle paneling and held at ground level with horizontal members called *jifuku* (ground cover) *nageshi*. This square area is called the main stage because the major part of the performing takes place here,

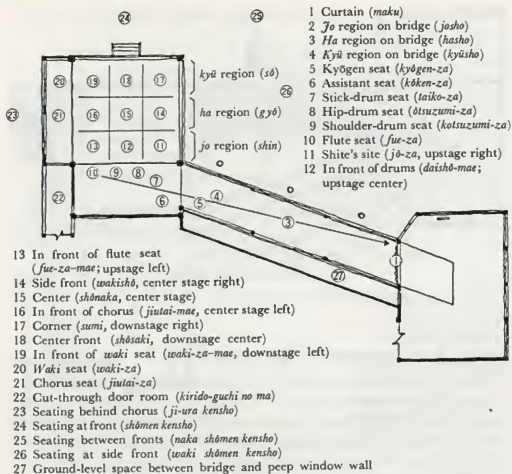




36. The plan of a Noh stage.



37. The finishing of the corners of pillars.



38. Spatial components of the Noh stage.

and the space is divided into nine sites or seats (*za*) grouped into three regions. (Numbers in parentheses refer to Figure 38.)

*Jō-za* (11): the upstage right corner, where acting on the main stage always begins and ends. Also called the *nanori-za*, or name-saying site.

*Daishō-mae* (12): upstage center, in front of the seats of the players of the hip (*dai*, large) and shoulder (*shō*, small) drums.

*Fue-za-mae* (13): upstage left, in front of the flute player's seat.

These three upstage sites constitute the *jō* (quiet, prefatory) region of the stage, which corresponds to the most formal *shin* level of the *shin-gyō-sō* system.

*Wakishō* (14): the *waki*-front, that is, center stage right, facing the part of the audience called the *waki*-front.

*Shōnaka* (15): center stage, also called true center.

*Jiutai-mae* (16): center stage left, in front of the chorus.

The three center stage sites form the *ha* (breaking, developmental) region, corresponding to the *gyō* (moving, semiformal) level of *shin-gyō-sō*.

*Sumi* (17): the corner, downstage right. The "sighting" pillar (*mitsuke-bashira*) in this corner that protrudes into the audience area is also called the corner pillar, hence the name of this area.

*Shōsaki* (18): "front forward," or downstage center, the forward-most part of the front side (*shōmen*) of the stage.

*Waki-za-mae* (19): downstage left, in front of the place where the *waki* sits.

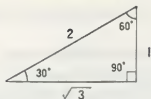
The three downstage sites constitute the *kyū* (active, climactic) region, corresponding to the *sō* (abstract, informal) level of *shin-gyō-sō*.

This division of the space into units is used in choreography to show positions and movements of the performers onstage, as in the instruction, "from the *jō-za* go to the *sumi* and turn left, then circle around to the left through the *waki-za-mae* to the *daishō-mae* and make a small circle there." All the movements and actions of the performers are specified in this way.

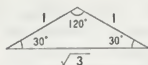
Spectators at Noh are often overheard complaining that they cannot see well because "the pillar is in the way," presumably referring to the corner or sighting pillar. As we have already mentioned, however, the pillars are not simply structural members that support the roof; neither are they mere ornamentation. For the performer they serve as important visual landmarks, and for the spectator they define the three-dimensional space that imparts a sense of depth to the actions of the performers, and they also function as frames, helping us to avoid missing subtle movements.

The proportions of this framed rectangular solid are in a width-to-height ratio of  $1:\sqrt{3}$ . This is also the ratio of the distance from the floor to the crossbeams to the distance from floor to ridgepole (Fig. 39a). Moreover, these same proportions are seen in the shape of the roof, whose peak forms an angle of  $120^\circ$  (Fig. 39b).

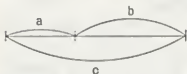
The square shape of the stage proper gives us another important ratio. As is commonly known, the ratio of the length of the diagonal



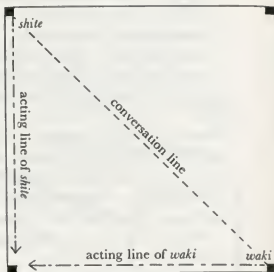
(a) Ratio of width to height of floor and pillars.



(b) Ratio of width to height of roof.



(c) The Golden Section.

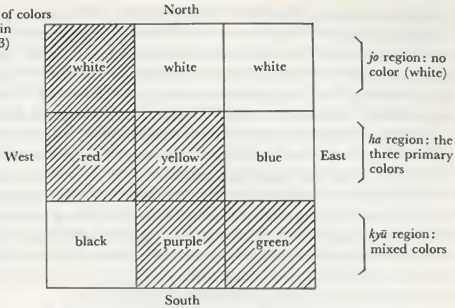


### 39. Various proportions.

to the side of a square is  $\sqrt{2}:1$ . At the beginning of a Noh the *waki* enters, speaks at the *jō-za*, then proceeds to the *waki* seat, where he sits facing west. The *shite* enters next and stands facing south at the *jō-za*. When their conversation begins, they turn 45 degrees to face one another. In other words there exists an unspoken acting line or direction for the *shite*, an upspoken acting line for the *waki*, and a conversation line between them (Fig. 40). The conversation line makes up the diagonal of the square and at the same time forms the base of an isosceles triangle, with the corner post as the vertex. Herein lies the reason why the southwest half of the Noh stage is considered the most important. Moreover, when the *shite* performs a section of recitation (called *katari*), he sits at center stage facing front, again forming a triangle with the front edge of the stage in the ratio of  $1:\sqrt{2}$ .

This proportion is surprisingly common in our daily environment. By Japanese industrial standards, for instance, the usual sizes of stationery, magazines, and the like are prescribed as rectangles with a width-to-length ratio of  $1:\sqrt{2}$ , so that such materials can be folded or

projection of colors  
onto curtain  
(see Fig. 43)



40. Acting lines and the conversation line; compare this with the magic square of Noh based on numbers and colors according to the Five-Elements Theory.

halved and always maintain that ratio. Japanese poetry was traditionally composed in alternating lines of five and seven syllables: this not only reflects a favoring of odd numbers but also happens to produce the ratio 1:1.4, which is very close to  $1:\sqrt{2}$ .

Proportions generally considered beautiful in the West are based on the Golden Section, a method of dividing a line so that  $a:b = b:c$ , and using those lines to produce an aesthetically pleasing rectangle of the proportions 1:1.618 (Fig. 39c). In contrast, we might call the ratios of  $\sqrt{2}$  and of  $\sqrt{3}$  discussed above the Japanese Golden Ratios, and such proportions are easily produced by the traditional carpenter's square, an L-shaped metal tool with one short leg and one long leg and the ratio of the length of the inner to the length of the outer of  $1:\sqrt{2}$ . This very handy device also has a scale showing  $\pi$ , the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

There are other interesting ratios, of course. One of the best known, conceived by the French giant of modern architecture Le Corbusier, is the *modulor* (golden module), a system of proportions for building

and for city planning based on the proportions of the human body.

The existence of the pillars on the Noh stage is important from a psychological as well as architectural point of view, for, by dividing what we perceive visually into such ratios, they somehow create a much stronger bond between the viewer and the viewed. Naturally this applies to the pillars of the bridge as well. In recent times, in response to complaints, stages with removable pillars or even without pillars have been built, but this is an instance of folly, of eliminating the columns from the veranda to improve the view, and it amounts to abandoning the very quality that makes the Noh stage unique. We mentioned earlier that the ring where sumo wrestling matches are held today is capped with a pillarless roof hung from the arena ceiling, but this is desirable for reasons of both safety and visibility. This does not mean, however, that what is appropriate for the site of a contest is appropriate for the site of creation of dramatic art.

**THE SIDE STAGE** The *waki-za*, or side stage, is a space with a railing on two sides that extends about four *shaku* (one *shaku* equals 0.994 feet) to stage left of the main stage. *Waki* is written with the character for "side"; the word *waki-za*, with *waki* written in phonetic *kana* syllables, refers to the spot where the *waki* sits, a spot down-stage left next to the *waki* pillar, on the border of the main and side stages. This side stage is sometimes mistakenly confused with the *waki's* seat (since they are both referred to as *waki-za*), but as Figures 36 and 38 show, it corresponds spatially to the rear stage, the *ato-za*, and should be similarly distinguished. The side stage is covered by the same roof as the main stage and the floor boards run vertically, as they do on the main stage. Historians say that this part of the stage first came into being at the end of the sixteenth century. The two performance positions on the side stage are the *waki* seat (down-stage) and the chorus seat (upstage).

**THE REAR STAGE** The word *ato-za* is usually written with the character meaning back or rear, but is sometimes written with another character, also pronounced *ato*, meaning traces, impressions, or what is left behind. The *ato-za* extends about one and a half *ken* (about nine feet) back from the main stage. The floor boards run horizontally, perpendicular to the floor boards of the main and side stages, so it is sometimes called *yokoita*, or "the horizontal boards."

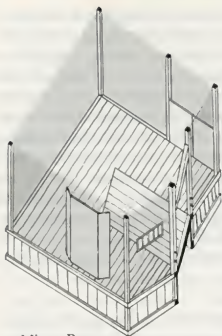
The rear stage is not covered by the main roof but by a thatched shed roof extending off the back of the main roof: together with the back wall of the stage (mirror board), it serves to reflect and diffuse sound. The performance positions located on the rear stage are the *hayashi-za*, the four spots just upstage of the main stage where the flutist and drummers sit, and the *kōken-za*, the upstage right corner of the rear stage, where the attendants of the *shite* sit. Occasionally, an attendant for an instrumentalist may sit just behind him. The *waki* has no *kōken*. In one special case, the play *Okina*, the chorus sits on the rear stage, behind the *hayashi*, the *shite's* attendants sit on the side stage, in the usual chorus seat, and the *kyōgen* attendants sit in the usual *shite kōken* seat. In the relatively few *Kyōgen* plays with a chorus and instruments, the chorus sits behind the *hayashi* on the rear stage.

**Za: Seat and Site** We have used the word *za* several times, translating it as seat, site, or position, and a note of explanation is in order here. The word *za* refers to two different concepts that are both very important in Noh.

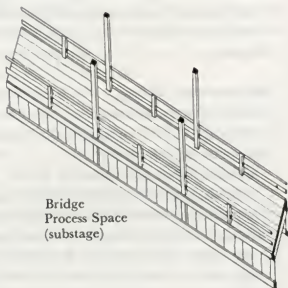
The first refers to the act of sitting, and thus means seat. We see it in such words as *zaseki* (seats), *tanza* (sitting erect), and *zazen* (sitting in Zen meditation). It also came to mean a troupe of entertainers, and hence theater, an extrapolation from the significance of the order of seating of the performers, with the *zashō*, or troupe leader, at the head. We see this meaning in *Bunraku-za* or *Kanze-za*. This *za* was originally the name of a guild or group with special rights, such as *Miya-za* (Shrine Guild) that put on festivals, or the *Tera-za* (Temple Guild), an organization of builders.

The second meaning of *za* is site, the place where some activity occurs, as in *Ginza* ("silver site"), the part of downtown Tokyo where silver was once minted, or *Kabuki-za*, where Kabuki is performed. From this it gradually came to mean the theater itself, as in *Meiji-za*.

The discussion here is limited to the second meaning of *za*, indicating place. A Noh theater might thus be called a *Noh-za* (Noh site); see Table 14 for a diagram of the many *za* that make up the five main *za* (Fig. 41) that in turn make up the Noh stage. *Za* is indeed a flexible concept!



Mirror Room  
Invisible Stage



Bridge  
Process Space  
(substage)

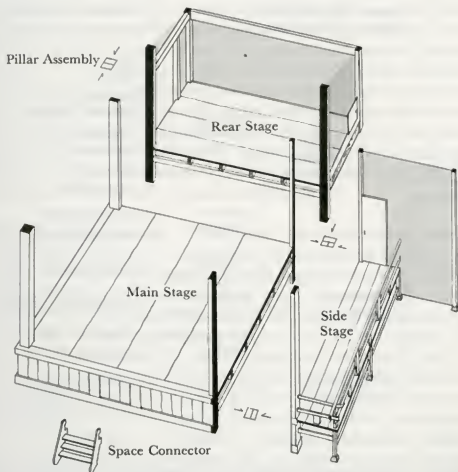
black inking = section  
halftone = fixed walls

**The Bridge** The special word for the passageway between the main stage and the mirror room is *hashi-gakari*. The word *hashi* means bridge, and *kakari* means suspension. This bridge space is open on both ends, from five to seven *shaku* wide and from seven to thirteen *ken* long (approximately from forty-two to seventy-seven feet). There are three bays, marked by pairs of columns front and back, three clearly defined spaces, or *ma*. The peaked thatched roof is separate from and lower than the main stage roof, and its ceiling is finished with “cosmetic rafters,” which are sloped parallel to the roof. There



are railings on both sides, and the floorboards run lengthwise. It is said to be modeled on the hallways or covered outdoor corridors that connected buildings in palaces or large residences. Behind this raised bridgeway is a strip of earth or white gravel, where there may be two pines planted. The three spaces, beginning at the mirror room, are called: the mask boards (*jo* place), next to the curtain; the music boards (*ha* place), in the middle; the fan boards (*kyū* place), next to the stage. (Boards always mean a portion of the stage in this connection.) The upstage part of the fan boards, called the *kyōgen-za* or *ai-za*, is the spot where the *ai-kyōgen* sits waiting to perform in Noh.

As the names indicate, each of the three parts of the bridge has



41. The five *za* (sites) of the Noh stage.

we members of the present generation will go beyond merely receiving and transmitting it and make the effort to continue to improve it, to try to creatively develop it into the best possible form for the future, then we can only add to its worth.

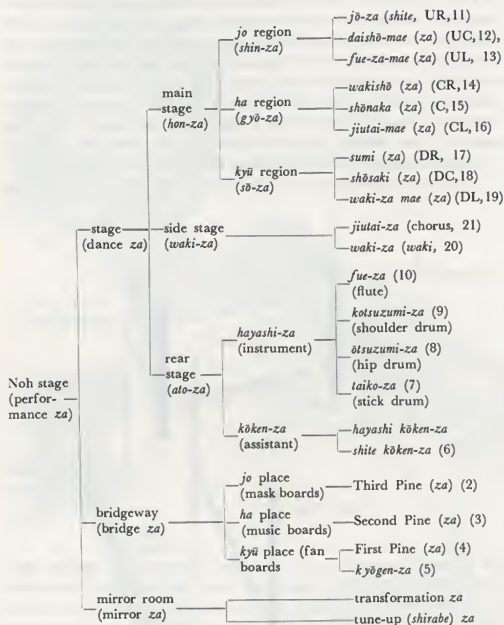
## AN ART OF TIME AND SPACE

The drama of Noh is depicted in song and dance, but calling Noh a kind of drama or a combination of singing and dancing does not begin to describe the nature of either its conception or its form. The elements involved in the performance of a Noh play are:

vocal music	<i>utai</i> (a form of chant)
instrumental music	<i>hayashi</i> (an orchestra composed of a flute and three drums)
acting techniques	<i>kata</i> (dance poses or actions)
dance elements	<i>mai</i> (dances accompanied by <i>utai</i> and <i>hayashi</i> )
fine arts, crafts	masks, robes, and instruments
architecture	the Noh stage, an independent structure
time	the mode of production
space	the unified space of stage plus audience

The last four elements in particular are rarely seen in other forms of theater to be as intricately woven together into a harmonious whole as in the Noh drama, making it a total stage art that approaches perfection. The resulting combination of elements is governed by a body of sound concepts and sophisticated theories that establishes a unique and highly refined aesthetic philosophy.

The arts are often categorized according to symbolic form: arts of space—plastic arts of stillness and composition such as painting, sculpture, and architecture; arts of time—the lively arts of motion and temporality such as music, literature, and drama. This categorization may be adequate for a rough understanding, but a great difficulty arises with further subdivisions within this simple physical

Table 14. The *Za* of Noh

Overall ← Functional ← Collected ← Composite ← Unit Spaces

NOTE: *Za* (spaces or sites) combine on an increasing scale from right to left to make up the total space of the Noh stage. Numbers in parentheses refer to the drawing of Spatial Components of the Noh Stage (Fig. 28). Stage sites: U=upstage, D=downstage, C=center stage, L=stage left, R=stage right.

its own character. This is shown in the entrance of the performer, where the process of *jo-ha-kyū* is shown as first, on the mask boards, he denies the existence of the mask, next, on the music boards, he begins to move with the rhythm of the instrumental music, and finally, on the fan boards, he directs our awareness to the fan, the focal point of the performance.

The bridge abuts the stage not on the perpendicular but at an angle between 100 to 105 degrees. This angle is actually very important and varies with the length and width of the bridge. In the drawing of the spatial components (Fig. 28) of the Noh stage there is an arrow marking a straight line from the flute player to the curtain at the end of the bridge. As this indicates, when the solo flute player accompanies the entrances and exits of performers, he must be able to see the curtain rise and fall in order to set the timing and length of a piece, and the angle of the bridge must allow for this. It is interesting to note that this applies to the positions of the musicians and the priority of instruments in setting tempo (since there is no conductor). The *taiko*, or stick drum, leads in plays with a *taiko*, and the hip drum, in plays without a *taiko*, and thus they are seated to be able to see the curtain easily. At times in the past the angle was greater, but today positioning the bridge at an angle has no meaning if it does not allow this function to be fulfilled.

**The Pitch of the Stage** The rather arcane term *bachi-korogashi*, or "rolling drumstick," is a metaphor for the pitch of the stage and bridge. The main stage slopes downhill slightly from front to back, and the bridge, from stage to mirror room, at enough of an angle to make the cylindrical drumsticks of the *taiko* roll upstage on the main stage or down toward the mirror room on the bridge. This shows in physical form the ideal of *jo-ha-kyū* that should apply to the performer's entrance down the bridge and to his acting on the main stage. (The term is also called *bachi-korobashi*, corrupted to *buchi-korobashi*, a word carpenters today use to indicate a slight tilt in a floor.)

It is mainly for architectural and production reasons that the floorboards of the main stage, rear stage, and bridge run vertically, horizontally, and vertically, each at a different pitch, but this fact also helps the masked performer to feel his way with tabi-clad feet (without

looking down) as he comes to the end of the bridge, crosses a corner of the rear stage, and enters the main stage. Moreover, during the performance he can ascertain his position on stage at any time by knowing which number board he is on. This is a great practical advantage in a stage art in which a mask greatly obstructs the actor's sight.

**The Mirror Room** The mirror room (*kagami no ma*) is sometimes also called the curtain room (*maku no ma*). It is an extension of the dressing room and also the beginning and ending point of both the acting and the actor's magical transformation. This dual-function space is perhaps more important as an extension of the bridge, as can be seen in Figure 41, the floorboards of the bridge do not end at the curtain but run well into the mirror room. At the same time, the curtain gives the space autonomy. Here, at what in Table 14 is called the transformation site, the costumed shite sits on a stool before the life-size figure reflected in the mirror, dons the mask, and concentrates on becoming one with the image in the mirror, his other. The instrumental players sit formally at the *shirabe-za*, or tuning site, and play the special tuning-up piece called *shirabe*, entering in the order of flute, shoulder, hip, and stick drums, gauging and adjusting to one another's timing and tone. At this stage the invisible part of Noh has begun.

After the tuning up, the instrumental players proceed along the far side of the bridge and take their places on stage. When it is time for the *shite* to enter, his performance starts behind the raised curtain, and similarly, after exiting, even after the curtain has been lowered, he continues his stately pace, in character, until he comes to a stop at a certain spot. Noh begins and ends in the mirror room.

**The Seeing Place** The place that is generally occupied by the audience has a special name in Noh: *kensho*, the seeing place. As is shown in the drawing of the spatial components of the Noh stage (Fig. 38), the seating is divided into the area directly in front of the stage (called *shōmen*, or front), the area facing the side (called *waki-shōmen*, or side front), the wedge between these two (called *naka-shōmen*, or middle front), and the area behind the chorus (*ji-ura*), rarely used for seating today. Over the years there has been a change from tiers

of tatami-matted platforms, still seen in a few older Noh theaters, to rows of modern theater seats. The ideal number of seats is between 350 and 500.

Separating the seating area from the Noh stage is a moat of pebbles, called the *shirasu* (literally, sand bar), a vestige of a wide area of raked sand between the stage and gallery or reviewing stands in the days when Noh was performed outdoors. It is also said to symbolize water, and in the past it served the practical function of reflecting light up onto the stage and bridge, which had deep overhanging eaves. The gap between the *shirasu* and the main stage is formally bridged by a set of three or four steps, called the *shirasu-bashigo* (ladder) or *kizahashi* (stairs). It has no function today except as a marker of the center of the stage. In the old days when a shogun or daimyo rewarded a performer for his art with such gifts as heavy silk kimono, the performer would descend these steps, don the kimono, and respond with what today we would call an encore. An actor's final performance, in particular, after which he was rewarded for long years of service with a gift of robes, came to be called "robe-bestowing (*shō-zoku-tabari*) Noh." We explained earlier how the *hanamichi* of Kabuki differs from the bridge of Noh, and indeed this set of steps was probably an early form of the *hanamichi*, used by patrons to give tips to favored performers.

**Noh on the Lawn: *Shibai no Noh*** The word *shibai* (literally, being-on-the-lawn) is used in modern Japanese to mean a play or drama, especially in Kabuki, but the expression *shibai no noh* has nothing to do with Kabuki. Rather, the term derives from the seating of the public on the lawn between the gallery and the stage in the outdoor performances of Noh in ancient times. In Noh, the best seats were in the galleries and the lawn seating was temporary at best; Kabuki, on the other hand, was basically a popular-theater form directed at the crowds rather than the aristocrats. The lawn seating was also important in Kabuki as a large audience was an indication of success in the entertainment industry. Patrons used the slang "going to be on the lawn" (*shiba-i ni iku*) to mean going to see Kabuki, and at some point *shibai* and Kabuki came to mean the same thing, so that today the word is used widely to mean play, drama, or theater of any kind; today, *shibai ni iku* means "going to the theater."

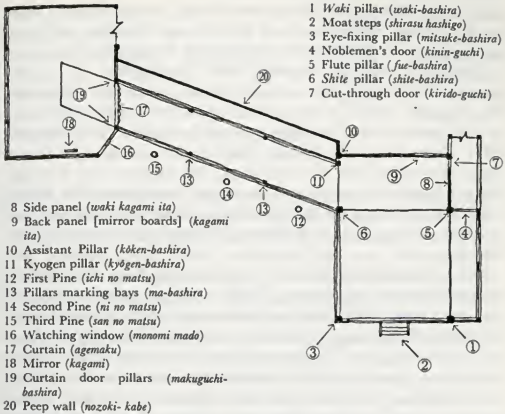
In Noh, too, when the stage became a permanent structure, the lawn was replaced with the sand or pebble moat, which was used to seat townspeople only in the public performances called *machi-iri* Noh, but when the Noh stage was moved indoors to the Noh theater, the *shirasu* was reduced in size and remained in form only. Thus, although the *kensho* of the Noh theater has the same kind of chairs as other theaters, a look at its architectural history suggests that we should think of them as in the gallery rather than on the lawn.

**The Dressing Rooms** The dressing rooms in a Noh theater are normally plain tatami-matted rooms with sliding walls. Properly, there should be a row of such rooms, the one closest to the stage for the *shite* and attendants, the next for the *waki*, the next for instrumentalists, and the next for Kyōgen performers, but the building cannot always be constructed to accommodate this practice, so there may be rooms on two floors, the sharing of rooms, or similar practical adaptations.

### THE PARTS OF THE STAGE

Each of the four pillars framing the main stage has a name. (Please refer to the Figure 42.) The *shite* pillar at upstage right becomes the focal point of a particular *shite's* performance. The sighting or eye-fixing pillar (*mitsuke-bashira*) at downstage right allows the actor to ascertain his own position at any time by keeping it within sight. Moreover, when the performer comes onto the main stage from the bridge, the first thing to strike his eyes is this column: hence, the name. because it is located on the one corner of the stage that protrudes into the audience, it is also called the *sumi-bashira* or corner pillar. The *waki* pillar at downstage left is named for its proximity to the *waki* seat, and it is also sometimes called the *daijin-bashira*, the pillar of the government official, because the *waki* role is often such a figure. The flute pillar (*fue-bashira*) is close to the flutist's seat (*fue-za*), and to this pillar is affixed a metal ring: a cord is threaded through a pulley on the ceiling rafter and through this ring in order to hoist and hold aloft the giant temple bell in the play *Dōjō-jū*.

In the wall at the upstage end of the side stage, beyond the chorus



42. The parts of the Noh stage.

seat, is a door called the nobleman's door (*kinin-guchi*) and it is said to be there so that an aristocrat taking part in a performance would not have to stoop to go through the *kirido-guchi*, the small door in the back corner. This nobleman's door is not used today. It is similar in conception to the nobleman's door installed in addition to the usual crawl-through door of the tea house. It is also said that this follows the form of certain shrine buildings of long ago, which had special side doors.

The back wall of the rear stage is made of panels, or "mirror boards," painted with the design of an ancient, gnarled pine tree. This wall is informally known as the pine panels. Perpendicular to this are the side mirror boards, with a painting of young bamboo, as discussed earlier.

Cut through the far corner of this wall is the *kirido-guchi* (cut-door



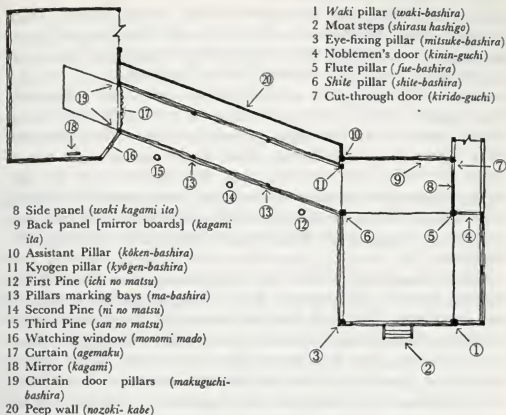
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Each of the four pillars framing the main stage has a name. (Please refer to the Figure 42.) The *shite* pillar at upstage right becomes the focal point of a particular *shite's* performance. The sighting or eye-fixing pillar (*mitsuke-bashira*) at downstage right allows the actor to ascertain his own position at any time by keeping it within sight. Moreover, when the performer comes onto the main stage from the bridge, the first thing to strike his eyes is this column: hence, the name, because it is located on the one corner of the stage that protrudes into the audience, it is also called the *sumi-bashira* or corner pillar. The *waki* pillar at downstage left is named for its proximity to the *waki* seat, and it is also sometimes called the *daijin-bashira*, the pillar of the government official, because the *waki* role is often such a figure. The flute pillar (*fue-bashira*) is close to the flutist's seat (*fue-za*), and to this pillar is affixed a metal ring: a cord is threaded through a pulley on the ceiling rafter and through this ring in order to hoist and hold aloft the giant temple bell in the play *Dōjō-ji*.

In the wall at the upstage end of the side stage, beyond the chorus



42. The parts of the Noh stage.

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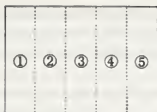
The back wall of the rear stage is made of panels, or "mirror boards," painted with the design of an ancient, gnarled pine tree. This wall is informally known as the pine panels. Perpendicular to this are the side mirror boards, with a painting of young bamboo, as discussed earlier.

Cut through the far corner of this wall is the *kirido-guchi* (cut-door

exit), a low, sliding door also known as the "coward's door": from the *kirido* those offstage can peek at the stage. Anything the actor has forgotten can be delivered unobtrusively through this door, so it is sometimes called the forgetting door (*wasure-guchi*). It is used primarily for the entrances and exits of the chorus and attendants. The engaged column in the back corner is not usually referred to by any special name but could perhaps be labeled the *kirido-guchi* pillar. There is also the *Kyōgen* pillar at the upstage right corner where the bridge joins the rear stage, and together with the *shite* pillar it frames the entrance to the bridge passageway. The *Kyōgen* pillar is just next to the *Kyōgen* seat. Immediately behind it, at the corner of the back wall, is the *kōken* (attendant) pillar, closest to the *kōken* seat.

Three young pines are set in the pebble moat in front of the bridge, centered between the columns. Today most are potted trees, and each has a name. The First Pine (*ichi no matsu*) is closest to the stage. It is also called the pivot (*kaname*) pine, the felicitations (*shūgen*) pine, or the end (*sue*) pine. The Second Pine (*ni no matsu*) is also known as the wind (*kaze*) pine or the middle pine. The Third Pine, closest to the curtain, is also called the *kakari* pine or the sleeve-brushing (*sode-suri*) pine. The pine trees are a vestige of the young pines used to mark the pathway for entrances and exits in the very earliest days of Noh, when it was performed on level ground in a pine forest, and they are said to symbolize the natural background of the journey towards the stage.

There are, surprisingly close at hand, other instances of this directionality of a process space with a series of numbered names. In a Shinto shrine, for instance, one proceeds from the outside through a series of gates (*torii*) toward the inner shrine, the sacred territory of the other world; the gates are numbered from the outside, beginning with the first *torii*, and as one goes deeper into the shrine the number increases. In the case of castles, on the other hand, one proceeds from the outer gate in toward the center circle, symbolic of this world, and the numbers decrease as one moves in, from the third circle (*san no maru*) to the second circle (*ni no maru*) and so on. This clearly shows an ordering of this world and the other world. The pines of the Noh stage function as visual landmarks for acting as symbols of the trisected space, and are used in choreo-



- 1 purple
- 2 white
- 3 red
- 4 yellow
- 5 green

43. The Noh curtain.

graphic instructions, as in "stop at the First Pine." The wall behind the bridge may be either a slatted "peep wall" or a solid "blind wall."

The entrance to the mirror room, called the *makuguchi*, or curtain door, is framed by two pillars called *makuguchi-bashira*. Between them is hung the curtain (*age-maku*). *Age* may be written with the character for raise or the character for above, and, because its use marks the beginning and end of a Noh, it is sometimes also called the *kiri* (cut) curtain. It is made figured damask sewn in a pattern of vertical stripes of three or five colors, and usually the colors are (from left to right) purple, white, red, yellow, and green (Fig. 43). The curtain is hung from the top, and the two lower corners are attached to bamboo poles, by which two seated assistants raise and lower the curtain.

The arrangement of the colors employs the use of the phenomenon that some colors seem to advance or jump forward, while others seem to retreat or draw back. Generally, we can consider red and yellow to be advancing colors, blue, blue-green, and blue-violet to be retreating colors, and green and purple to be static, neither advancing nor retreating. In terms of the Five-Elements Theory, the colors are arranged in this order (left to right): north (represented by deep purple), west, south, center, east, such that south, the most important direction, is in the middle, flanked by west and center; north and east, the least important directions, are on the outer edges. If we apply this grouping system to the coloring of the curtain as described above, we come to certain conclusions: (1) black or retreating colors are not used; (2) the outer stripes are of static colors; (3) the strongest advancing colors are in the center.

These three points hold true even in different color arrangements. When only three colors are used for five stripes, for example, we find the pattern purple-green-red-green-purple.

conception of somearts as existing only within space and others as flowing only within time. The illustrated *Tale of Genji* scrolls, for example, clearly tell a story that moves through time, but they also illustrate it spatially with a graphic representation of a type of architecture called *fuki-nuki yatai* in which portions of roofs are missing, so that we can have a bird's-eye view into rooms. Picasso also was able to express both time and space in a drawing on a single canvas by incorporating both a front view and a profile of a face. Drama, too, is not a pure time art like music, for acting takes place in time while it moves through space. All of these examples plainly belong in both categories.

Under this system, Noh would seem to belong to the same category as drama, but there are important differences in the basic natures of the two. Noh, even before a play begins, enjoys the unique architectural space of the Noh theater. Moreover, there is a duality of time and space in Noh: the time frame of the acting, which would normally flow from past to future, is warped or even made to flow backwards, so that the passage of time is nonrealistic, but the action itself, while it takes place within a constantly shifting scene, is performed within an actual space. I propose to distinguish the Noh drama from other forms of theater by calling it an art of time and space; perhaps it would even be correct to say that it transcends or even perfects time and space. Throughout this book I will use the words time and space, but for the reasons explained here I will not treat them as opposing concepts but as different aspects of a single time-space continuum.

The concept of perfection often leads to stylization or formalization, and there is a danger of going too far and lapsing into stereotype, with a decline in quality. This has not happened in Noh. Not content with facile reproduction of set forms, Noh performers have always explored to the very depths the process of joint creation in a complex interaction of wills and techniques. This is especially true today. Noh performers should never aim at the target of perfection with stylization but should engage in an unending struggle to attain perfection, always one step this side of it to prevent standardization. That is to say, Noh performers, although they are always trying to achieve perfection, should always stay on this side of it, lest that achieved perfection be solidified into an unchangeable style.

The effect of this seen from the audience is a feeling that the curtain bulges out gently from the frame of the doorway toward the bridge, suggesting the active nature of the mirror space on the other side of the curtain.

We see different arrangements of colors on the curtains in old drawings or prints, such as red-yellow-green-indigo-purple. This is evidently related to the complex laws governing the use of color imposed by the Tokugawa government (certain colors could be worn or used only by members of certain social classes).

In the same wall as the curtain door, facing the stage, is a small watching (*monomi*) window, also called the *bugyō* (government official) window, peep window, or ventilation window. It is a small one-way window with a bamboo blind hung on the outside, and from the mirror room one can see what is happening on stage. It is said, however, that originally it was installed for performers to watch for signals from a government administrator seated in the audience, or to permit better ventilation.

## FURTHER PERSPECTIVES

**The Curtain as Part of the Performance** The assistants kneeling on either side of the curtain door in the mirror room use poles to raise and lower the curtain in a number of different ways. For the *honmaku*, or true curtain, they raise it all the way when the performer gives the command "O-maku" ("The curtain"). The way in which the performer says this indicates the way in which the curtain should be raised: in a solemn role or play he will deliver a slow and dignified "O-ma-a-ku" and the curtain will be raised slowly and quietly, but for a rapid or lively entrance he will bark out a sharp "O-mak!" and it will be swept up quickly. This is a projection of the actor's will onto the movement of the curtain, making it a part of the performance, and giving the audience an indication of the type of character even before it enters. Likewise, when the actor exits, the curtain is opened and closed in a manner appropriate to his movement down the bridge and the level of dignity or formality of mask and robes. The *age-maku* differs completely, in

both form and function, from the curtains of regular theaters and should not be considered in the same light.

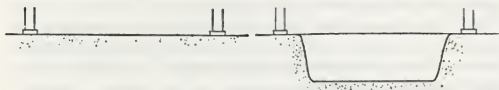
For the entrances and exits of the instrumental musicians, the curtain is not raised at all but is gathered and held aside by hand: this is called the *kata-maku* (one-sided curtain) or sometimes *shibori-maku* (gathered curtain).

Another technique is the *han-maku* (half-curtain), in which it is raised halfway and then quickly lowered, giving the audience a glimpse of the character before its actual entrance. The mirror room is sometimes called the curtain room because it is a space defined by the curtain, which is truly of great significance in Noh, in both the timing and style of its opening and closing.

**The Stage as a Percussion Instrument** The Noh stage does more than provide a site for music and acting. It also serves as a kind of percussion instrument. From ancient times giant pots (just over three feet in diameter) have been buried or suspended in frames at selected spots under the main stage, rear stage, and bridge, enhancing the reverberations of stamping feet and also serving as echo chambers for the vocal and instrumental music. There are a variety of theories about the arrangement and installation of these pots, but the illustration in Figure 44 is probably an good approximation of their historical development. The number of pots is as follows: four or six beneath the main stage, two or three beneath the rear stage, and one each under the *jo*, *ha*, and *kyū* areas on the bridge. In Noh theaters built in modern times, these pots are frequently replaced with well- or bowl-shaped hollows of concrete.

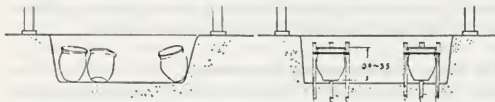
The stage is constructed in a way that augments the echo effect. The long, thick floorboards are not cut first and fit together later but are planed together and then laid, so that they resonate deeply. There are no sills used; rather the horizontal support timbers (sleepers) beneath the boards are planed in the "monkey-check" style (Fig. 45) to minimize the area of contact with the underside of the boards and to facilitate the transfer of vibrations from the boards to the pots.

**Composite Vision** When the Noh stage was brought indoors and protected from the elements and from extraneous noise, several



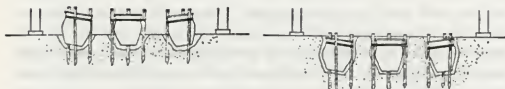
1 Earliest period.

2 Up to Tenshō Period (before 1570s)



3 Early Momoyama (ca. 1575)

4 Middle Momoyama (ca. 1590)



5 Early Edo (ca. 1615)

6 Middle Edo (ca. 1715)



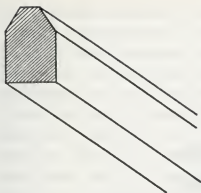
7 Late Edo (ca. 1825)



8 Top view of urn (about three shaku in diameter)

44. *The placement of reverberation pots beneath the stage.*





45. "Monkey-cheek" planing. Sleeper beams are planed to minimize the area of contact with the stageboards they support.

conditions were suddenly changed. The stage floor was cleaned and polished like a mirror, becoming a work of art, and this allowed the gliding footsteps of the actors to become even smoother, making their movements less realistic but far more graceful. The improved lighting, with a light source providing a steady amount of good quality light, allowed an exquisite delicacy in the Noh, leading to a stronger fantasy effect of projected images. The figure of the performer is reflected in the floor, his white tabi the border, and a kind of oscillation between the real figure and the reflection takes place; together they dance and then come to a stop. This is surely an instance of what psychologists call composite vision, or multiple image, and it adds even more to the mystery of Noh, one image ever enhancing and shaping our perceptions of the other, ultimately uniting the separate elements of each into a profound gestalt of *yūgen*.

## THE PLOTS

### Simple Stories

#### THE THEME: A SONG OF PRAISE

The plots of Noh plays are so simple that we can hardly call them stories: it would be more correct to call them a series of hints that guide the audience in a dramatic way. The plots are often mere anecdotes that can be summarized in a paragraph or two. The plot of the great play *Hagoromo*, for example, is based on the legend of the Feather Robe, known to every Japanese schoolchild: At Matsubara in Miho, a fisherman finds a beautiful robe draped on a pine tree. He is about to take it home when a heavenly being appears, says the robe is hers, and tearfully begs him to return it. He agrees on condition that she dance for him. She dons the robe and dances and gradually disappears into heaven.

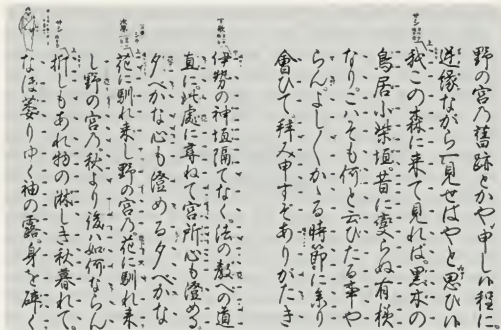
This is the whole story, barely enough for a skit. The highlight of the play comes when the fisherman hesitates to return the robe, doubting whether she will dance, and the heavenly being says, "Doubt is for mortals; it exists not in heaven." The *waki* fisherman is brought on as a typical commoner and in an exchange with the heavenly being elicits this line, thereby creating a strong impression of the purity and elegance of the heroine and creating a world of *yūgen*: for this purpose the limitations of the simple story are transcended and a play lasting nearly an hour is created. The story is little more than an excuse for the music and dance, which is perhaps

characteristic of music- or dance-oriented theater around the world.

As was discussed earlier, Noh plays are divided into five categories by main characters—gods, men, women, lunatics, and demons—and for each there is a simply constructed story of a somewhat set style. Therefore, we cannot judge the worth of a play by comparing its plot to the plots of other types of plays or by literary analysis of the text only. The texts are of a poetic language rich in images and allusions, certainly deserving of careful study, but they come to life only when they are performed, chanted to the movements of the performers. Disappointment awaits anyone who reads Noh plays only for the stories, looking for interesting and varied dramatic twists as one might with other forms of drama. We might compare the story to a haiku poem written in calligraphy on a special poem card: one not only reads the words but also enjoys the arrangement and shape of the characters, the use of the ink-brush strokes, and even the spaces left empty, just as one appreciates not only the plot but also the acting, singing, and timing in Noh. And even these, we must understand, are simply media that evoke and glorify what we really seek in a play: the common human themes and sentiments embodied by the hero. A Noh play, in other words, is not the telling of a series of events but an exploration, an evocation, and indeed a song of praise.

## PLAYS WITHOUT SCRIPTS

In addition to this lack of complicated plot, Noh lacks anything corresponding to the complete scored script of a play. There is a libretto (Fig. 46), called the *utai-bon* (chant book), but it gives just the words and style of the chant, with only sketchy rubrics indicating the placement of instrumental pieces and dance. It differs completely in function from a complete script or score, with no indications of the setting of scenes, choreography, or even how the chant is to be combined with the instrumental music. In addition to the *utai-bon*, there are books with dance instructions called *kata-tsuke*, and scores of standard versions of different instrumental pieces for the drummers (*te-tsuke*) and flute (*fu-zuke*). If all of these are compiled and combined in accordance with production notes called *ennoh-hikae*, Noh can be



46. Two pages from the utai-bon of Nonomiya. The text is written vertically in large letters, and the columns are read from right to left. Dots and marks to the right of each letter indicate pitch or duration. Rubrics along the top indicate the names of the sections, how they are to be delivered, and who is to perform them.

performed quite magnificently. While the text and story of each play are unique, common elements of music and dance are combined in a series of interlocking systems for the performance of each Noh, as is discussed in detail in Chapters 12, 13, and 18. This means that a play is given not by intensification of a script but rather by division of labor and standardization of elements. This as a very modern approach to the handling of the artistic data that goes into a play.

## LAUGHTER IN NOH

Noh is essentially a drama of tragedy. It follows that the stories, too, are created within a framework of sadness, with the exception of Noh plays of the first category about the benevolence of the gods or of the particularly felicitous pieces called *shūgen-mono*. We find very

little laughter in most Noh, but there are two exceptions worthy of note. One is the play *Sanshō*, a dramatization of a famous Chinese painting of three hermit sages who meet, drink, unwittingly break a vow never to step outside the retreat, and then all burst into laughter. There is also a moment of laughter in the play *Kagekiyo*. A warrior grown old, blind, and impoverished relives his final battle, including the incident in which he grapples with his enemy, grasping the neckpiece of his helmet. It breaks off in his hand and neither one of them wins: they acknowledge one another's prowess and part laughing. In both of the plays the laughter is part of the story, but in neither does the performer actually laugh.

### ALLUSIVE VARIATION (*Honka-dori*)

Most of the stories of Noh plays come from well-known literary classics, war tales, or legends. They employ, in other words, the device known as *honka-dori*, allusive variation on a familiar work or theme, much as poems in the collection called the *Shin Kokinshū* consciously echo earlier works. There are few original stories in Noh. The sources are the myths and legends of Japan and the Asian continent; official sacred histories, local histories, and imperial anthologies of poetry, such as the *Man'yōshū* (eighth century) and the *Kokinshū* (tenth century); the great body of tale literature including the tales of Genji, Ise, the Heike, Yoshitsune, Yamato, the Soga brothers, and the Heiji insurrection; Buddhist fables; and a number of other classics, such as the *Taiheiki*. A story is created around a single incident or poem from one of these sources, and every known literary device is employed in the text: word play, multiple entendres, epithets, allusions of all kinds, word associations, pivot words, and the like. Sometimes the final product of this process is criticized as a mere hodge-podge or patchwork. However, the language of Noh is not really as complicated in structure as it may seem at first. The reverberations and associations of words are used to their fullest to create an overall impression charged with emotion; this is done not in order to make the scripts more complex but in order to pursue the infinite beauty of language. Zeami used these many techniques of playing with language not only because he wanted to write beautiful

words; he used the words as tools to evoke that very special magic of *yūgen* that is itself the heart of the drama.

Three of the major sources of stories for Noh plays are the *Tales of Ise*, *The Tale of Genji*, and the *Tales of the Heike*. Court poetry, legends, and folklore also provided a number of interesting stories, the success of which, ultimately, depends upon the ability of the performers to enthrall the audience with their art.

## THE PERFORMERS

### Actors as Creators

All those who appear in Noh are known collectively as performers. This creative staff consists of professionals with the artistic training and ability to perform on stage, today called *nohgaku-shi* (master of Nohgaku), but in the past known as *noh yakusha* (Noh actor). Each type of performer, whether *shite*, *waki*, *ai*, flutist, or drummer, must devote a lifetime to mastering his own special craft. Each performs only that role or instrument on stage, but in practice it is necessary to have an understanding of all the arts involved. The instrumentalists must know the chant and dance, and the *shite* actor must train in all the Noh disciplines. Semiprofessionals trained to teach one of the arts but lacking a total mastery of Noh are called *shihan* and are distinguished from *nohgaku-shi*.

The classifications of performers and types of roles or instruments they play are shown below:

*Shite-kata*: *shite*, *shite-zure* (*tsure*), *tomo*, *kokata*, *jiutai* (chorus);

*Waki-kata*: *waki*, *waki-zure*, *tomo*;

*Hayashi-kata*: flute, shoulder-drum, hip-drum, stick-drum players;

*Kyōgen-kata*: in Kyōgen plays (*hon-kyōgen*): all roles (*shite*, *ado*, *tachi-shū*); in Noh plays: *ai* or *ai-kyōgen* (called *omo-ai* and *ado-ai* if more than one); in *Okina*: Sambasō, Mask Bearer;

*Kōken* (attendant): in Noh, *shite-kata*, or appropriate *hayashi-kata*; usually none for *waki*; in Kyōgen, Kyōgen actor.

We often hear that there are five schools of Noh, and this is true

conception of somearts as existing only within space and others as flowing only within time. The illustrated *Tale of Genji* scrolls, for example, clearly tell a story that moves through time, but they also illustrate it spatially with a graphic representation of a type of architecture called *fuki-nuki yatai* in which portions of roofs are missing, so that we can have a bird's-eye view into rooms. Picasso also was able to express both time and space in a drawing on a single canvas by incorporating both a front view and a profile of a face. Drama, too, is not a pure time art like music, for acting takes place in time while it moves through space. All of these examples plainly belong in both categories.

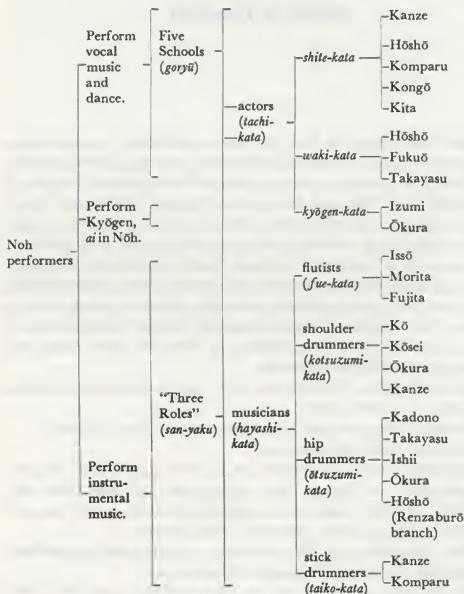
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The concept of perfection often leads to stylization or formalization, and there is a danger of going too far and lapsing into stereotype, with a decline in quality. This has not happened in Noh. Not content with facile reproduction of set forms, Noh performers have always explored to the very depths the process of joint creation in a complex interaction of wills and techniques. This is especially true today. Noh performers should never aim at the target of perfection with stylization but should engage in an unending struggle to attain perfection, always one step this side of it to prevent standardization. That is to say, Noh performers, although they are always trying to achieve perfection, should always stay on this side of it, lest that achieved perfection be solidified into an unchangeable style.



if it refers to the five schools of *shite-kata*, but there are a number of schools of all the types of performers and instruments listed above, as can be seen in Table 15. Each school is headed by an *iemoto* (head-master) and within each school certain performers or families may

Table 15. The Performers of Noh



dominate: the *iemoto* does not necessarily belong to the main family of a school.

Table 15 shows only schools that are extant. In addition, the Shindō School of *waki-kata* and the Shunnichi School of flute were active until quite recently. The Sagi School of Kyōgen prospered until the apocalyptic changes of the Meiji era (1868–1912) caused its downfall, and it survives today only as a protected Intangible Cultural Property in Yamaguchi, in western Honshū. Of the five schools of *shite-kata*, the Kanze and Hōshō are grouped as *kami-gakari* (metropolitan, originally based in the ancient capital, Kyoto) and the Komparu, Kongō, and Kita as *shimo-gakari* (regional, originally based in Nara). Note that the Hōshō School of *waki-kata* is *shimo-gakari*, a separate entity from the *shite* Hōshō School. The collective term for all the performers is *go-ryū san-yaku* (the “Five Schools” [of *shite-kata*] and “Three Duties” or roles [*waki*, *Kyōgen*, instruments]), a major distinction between the various *nohgaku-shi*. Kyōgen actors are also called *kyōgen-shi*.

In the Edo period (1603–1868), before the *shite-kata* were referred to as five schools (*go-ryū*), they were referred to as the four troupes and one school (*shi-za ichi-ryū*), the Kita School being a school (literally, stream) and the other four, *za* (established entertainment organizations). This shows that the relatively recently formed Kita School still lacked full-scale performance rights.

There was also a system of troupe-affiliated performers, and members of the three *yaku* (*waki*, *kyōgen*, *hayashi*) would only perform with a given school (*za*) of *shite-kata*. This was abolished in the Meiji era, and today, Noh can be performed by players from any combination of schools. Because there are differences in melody and text, however, *shite-kata* of different schools do not perform together: the *shite*, *tsure*, *kokata*, and chorus are always of the same school.

### THE *Shite*: SYMBOL OF THE NOH SPACE

The actor who performs or “does” the main role in a Noh play is called the *shite*, the “doer” or performer. It is usually written phonetically but can also be written with the characters meaning do or act. The *shite*, as the major role within a play, not only serves the practical

function of showing a series of dramatic events, but also mediates a dramatic shared experience, guiding the flow of the consciousness of the audience as the imaginary symbol dominating the Noh space. Thus, there is a great difference between the *shite* and the lead or hero of a typical play. Noh is always performed with the *shite* at the center, and conversely the *shite*, by being of one mind with the audience through seeing himself from its position, acts and dances within a communion of hearts.

The symbolic nature of the *shite* is further heightened by the sophisticated dramatic forms unique to Noh, and within the flow of space and time the audience can grasp the eternal human themes suggested and participate in the aesthetic fulfillment of Noh. Zeami offered instruction in nine types of acting ("nine bodies")—woman, old man, unmasked (i.e., real) man, lunatic, priest, warrior in hell, god, demon, and foreigner (from Asian continent)—and later reduced this to three basic types—old person, woman, warrior—to which a note was added or the body types of the lunatic and demon. This meant that one could act all roles using these five body types in appropriate combinations: a warrior in hell could be shown with a combination of techniques from the old man and warrior types, a god with the young warrior type, or a priest with the old man technique.

### THE *Waki*: REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AUDIENCE

The word *waki* is an abbreviation of *waki no shite*, the side doer, and this role in a Noh play is another "doer," not an auxiliary character attached to the *shite*. I have called the *waki* the representative of the audience, but in fact the most important function of the *waki* is to create a reason for the *shite* to appear and perform, and, in addition, he evokes, with appropriate responses, the thoughts, feelings, and pleas of the main character, so this is a very important "antagonist" role essential to the development of the play. However, this is not the same as the classical idea of "antagonist," since the *waki* is not someone who propels the action forward through his opposition. We might rather call the *waki* the coordinator of the play; thus, his own acting should be kept to a minimum. Once he has drawn out the *shite* he seats himself at the *waki-za*, behind the *waki* pillar, out of

sight of the audience, and stays there unmoving except when necessary for the development of the play. In a sense he has a dual role.

There is even a humorous Edo verse, "The *waki* priest seems to want a pipe." This aptly expresses the seemingly bored detachment of the *waki*. He can be quite idle, and in the role of a priest, in particular, he moves very little for long parts of the play. The *waki* is always the passive, negative, dark yin, in contrast to the active, positive, bright yang of the *shite*, and they complement one another to harmonize in performance.

There are three major types of *waki* characters: the official—a shrine official or retainer; the priest—a high level Buddhist priest or traveling monk; and the man—a warrior, townsman, country person, mountain priest, or the like. All *waki* appear as living men. They never play female characters or wear masks. Perhaps the most representative among these types of characters is the traveling priest. With neither permanent home nor worldly possessions, he is able to experience both the bitter and the sweet in the world, and because he is always journeying, it never seems odd or improbable for him to appear in a given place. From the dramatist's point of view, this is a very useful type of character. As many must have said, "How much more interesting travel would be if one could do it as the traveling priest in Noh does." Indeed, he has a sense of humor, an interest in everything around him, and an exquisite timing for meeting theatrical characters. This character is also essential because as a priest he can communicate with ghosts and perform rites to help the anguished spirits he encounters achieve repose or enlightenment, a typical way of ending a play.

In a few rather unusual Noh plays there is a dramatic confrontation between *waki* and *shite*. Apparently such plays were added to the Noh repertoire after the Ōnin Wars (1467–77), when there were few opportunities to perform in the capital and troupes were forced to go on tours of rural provinces, where audiences wanted to see action and spectacle. Some plays of this type are *Tanikō*, *Chōryō* (Chang Liang) and *Rashōmon*. There are also some plays in which the role of the *waki* is so important that they are called *waki* Noh (written in Japanese phonetic script and not to be confused with the first-category god plays, also called *waki* Noh, written with the Sino-Japanese character); an example of this is *Dampū*.

## SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

The *tsure* is a character who accompanies the main character, either as *shite-zure* or *waki-zure*. In a few exceptional plays like *Futari Shizuka*, *Kosode Soga*, and *Shari*, the *shite-zure* is almost as important as the *shite*, and is also called *moro-jite*, or twin *shite*. These twin *shite* characters usually dance together in an *ai-mai*.

The *tomo* is a companion, an even smaller role than the *tsure*; it is usually added only for dramatic interest.

THE *Kokata*: THE CHILD AS THE EMBODIMENT OF *Yūgen*

The *kokata*, or child performer, appears in Noh in a completely different stature from that of the *waki* or *tsure*. It is natural for a child to play the role of a child, but in Noh, children are also used to play other roles, in a unique way that takes the apparent contradictions into account. There are a number of theories about why this is done; two of them are as follows:

(1) Children are used to play emperors or others of very lofty standing, both out of respect and in order to make the apparent depiction as symbolic as possible, deepening the feeling of *yūgen* by avoiding overly realistic depiction. This is done in particular when the character has a love relationship with the *shite*, where portrayal by an adult would somehow be too graphic for Noh.

(2) The playwrights of the Noh theater embodied *yūgen* in its true form by expressing the past in the form of a child, symbolizing the beauty of the "beginner's mind." The lonely agony of the warrior in hell, the yearning of the lovelorn—even these lofty emotions are evoked through the beauty of the figure as a child.

We can consider both of these explanations to be legitimate. A guiding principle in the creation of Noh is the abstraction of reality in order to evoke unlimited expression, and such use of the child is consistent with that. Examples of this use of a child for such revered characters as Yoshitsune in *Ataka* and *Funa Benkei*, Yoritomo in *Daibutsu Kuyō*, or Emperor Keitei in *Hana-gatami*, clearly illustrate the value of this technique for the unique form of expression that is Noh.

However, this does not completely explain the existence of the

*kokata*. I would like to offer my own theory. In Noh, in principle, there is the portrayal of only one person or main character. This can be carried out with the *shite* as that character and with the *waki* to draw him out, but, for reasons of dramatic structure, another important character, nearly always played by a child, can also appear. One way of handling this is with what we might call the effect of mutual support. Many elements characteristic of these three characters can be balanced and harmonized with a complementary pairing of large and small, for example, or light and dark, high and low, active and still. None of the elements is secondary—rather, each supports its opposite. This method is very often used in compositions in space. In an earlier chapter the principle of *ten-chi-jin* was discussed as embodied in the design of a castle with three towers; and similarly, in the structure of a Noh play, three characters can be paired in different ways to create a nonsymmetrical harmony.

One example is the play *Ataka*, with the role of Yoshitsune taken by a child. The *shite* is his protector, the giant warrior-monk Benkei, and the *waki* is the official at the barrier, Togashi. All three are essential elements, and without a disordering of the triangle they are paired to contrast and harmonize—action and stillness in Benkei and Togashi, large and small bodies, high and low voices in Benkei and Yoshitsune—and through this use of a child actor, these interactions are made possible, and the spectators are made to feel the central importance of the *shite*.

### THE *Hayashi*:

#### INSTRUMENTALISTS REGULATE RHYTHM

The music of Noh is centered more on rhythm than on melody. Thus, it is created by one wind and three percussion instruments, the main function of the flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, and stick drum being to govern the rhythm that divides up time. The four instrumental musicians come onstage before all the other performers and play the entrance music, which is like a sacred invocation; then, during the play, in addition to creating the rhythms necessary to maintain proper *ma* (spaces, timing), they change the tempo to lead

the chant and dance. When the play is over, they are the last to exit. In the following chapter on the music of Noh, their activities will be discussed in detail.

### THE *Jiutai*: THE CHORUS

The chorus and the choral music of Noh are call *jiutai*, or ground chant. The six to ten members are all Noh masters, *shite-kata* of the same school as the *shite*. They sit in two rows on the upper side stage, entering and exiting through the *kirido* in the back corner. The role of the chorus is essentially to keep the story moving, setting the scene, and describing the characters and action, sometimes speaking for the *shite* or *waki*. Although we refer to the *jiutai* as the chorus, it is important to note that their music is not harmonized singing but unison chant, something heard in much of traditional Japanese music. It is also called *dō-on* (same sound) or *dō-gin* (same singing), and the first choral passage in a text, called *sho-dō* (first chorus), marks an important point in the progress of a play.

When Buddhist sutras are chanted by a group each reciter proceeds at his own pitch and tempo, producing an eerie harmony believed to have some magical force, and Noh may have been chanted this way in early days, but it was gradually refined to the present method, in which the head of the chorus sets the key and timing and the chant is sung by everyone at the same pitch and tempo. The Noh is always focused on the *shite*, and the chorus must work to perceive the intent of the *shite* and strive constantly to augment and enhance the piece and move it in the desired direction. The relationship of the chorus to the *shite* is that of ground to figure, in the mutual interaction of the *gyō* level of the *shin-gyō-sō* construct as discussed in Part I. (See Table 8).

### THE *Ai-Kyōgen*: THE NARRATOR OF NOH

The Kyōgen actor has two major functions, as is explained above. One is to perform in the independent *hon-kyōgen*, plays that come between Noh plays. The other is to play the *ai-kyōgen*, or *ai*, within

Noh. The *ai* is usually a minor figure—a local person, servant, inn-keeper, or boatman—who questions the *waki* and in simple language retells or adds to the story between the acts, while the *shite* is offstage, thus adding a new dimension to the drama. In Phantasmal (*mugen*) Noh, in particular, the *ai* introduces a period of real time into the fantasy time by coming on as a person of the present, and this serves to make the existence of the ghost seem quite brilliant.

The *ai-kyōgen* may appear in the Noh only to retell the story between acts or he may take part in the action of the play. The former is called *katari-ai* (recitation) and the latter *ashirai-ai* (accompaniment, participation).

If the *katari-ai* consists simply of the actor's sitting at center stage and reciting the story, it is called *i-gatari*. If he stands and recites it is *tachi-gatari*, and if he engages in conversation with other characters, it is *tachi-shaberi*.

Of the *ashirai-ai*, there are *kyōgen-mawashi*, when the *kyōgen* takes a realistic role of direct participation in the story; *kuchi-ake* (mouth opening), when the *kyōgen* comes on at the beginning of the Noh play (in the form called *kyōgen kaikō*, opening); and *hayauchi-ai* (rapid beat), when he rushes on or off.

The *ai* plays a variety of roles, those mentioned above as well as minor deities, retainers, temple servants, workmen, small *tengu*, and the like. There are a few more elaborate *ai-kyōgen*, performed between acts of certain Noh, with more substantial stories and such characters as monkeys, clams, and even seaweed!

### THE *Kōken*: THE MASTER AS ASSISTANT

The word *kōken* means watching from the rear. Although the word "assistant" is used, the *kōken* is in fact a nonperforming performer, a master of Noh often senior to the *shite*, an important anchoring presence on the stage. This contrasts with the nimble *kuroko* of Kabuki, young trainees dressed and hooded in black, whom the audience is not supposed to see as they rush about performing minor tasks.

There are always *kōken* for the *shite-kata*, and sometimes for the *hayashi-kata* as well. The *shite-kata kōken* is a member of the same school as the *shite* (as are members of the chorus). He (or they) watches



① 能	② シテ方名	③ ツレ名	1 title of Noh
④ 曲名	⑤ ワキ方名		2 name of <i>shite</i>
⑥ 小書名	⑦ 大鼓方名		3 name of <i>tsure</i> (if any)
⑧ フキツレ名	⑧ 小鼓方名		4 note on variant performance (if any)
⑨ 太鼓方名	⑩ 笛方名		5 name of <i>waki</i>
⑪ 間	⑫ 狂言方名		6 name of <i>waki-zure</i> (if any)
⑬ 後見名	⑭ 地謡前列	⑮ 地謡後列	7 name of hip drummer ( <i>ôtsuzumi-kata</i> )
⑯ 後見名	⑰ 地謡前列	⑱ 地謡後列	8 name of shoulder drummer ( <i>kotsuzumi-kata</i> )
⑲ 地謡前列	⑳ 地謡後列		9 name of stick drummer ( <i>taiko-kata</i> )
㉑ 地謡前列	㉒ 地謡後列		10 name of flutist ( <i>fue-kata</i> )
㉓ 地謡後列			11 <i>ai-kyōgen</i>
			12 name of <i>ai</i>
			13 names of <i>kōken</i>
			14 names of members of chorus
			15 title of <i>Kyōgen</i>
			16 names of <i>Kyōgen</i> actors

## 47. A sample Noh program.

over the progress of the play, changing the costume of the *shite* on-stage when necessary, prompting in a normal voice should the *shite* forget a line, and handling props as required. The *kōken* of the *hayashi-kata* may belong to a different school. They exchange instruments (bringing on a hip drum with freshly-dried skins, for example), tighten the lashing on a drum, and otherwise assist as necessary. Both kinds of *kōken* have the responsibility of taking over should the performer be unable to continue.

As shown in Table 15, these performers belong to different schools with differences in performance and interpretation, but whatever the combination of schools for a given performance, the names of the performers are shown in the printed program in a standard form, illustrated in Figure 47. Sometimes the names of the members of the chorus or the *kōken* are omitted, but it is customary to list all others.

Next to the title of the play there may be a note that the version given is a variation from the usual, called *kogaki* (fine print). The play *Shakkyō*, for example, usually ends with a spectacular dance by a mythical lion, but there is a version of the play in which a pair of lions dance (one as *shite* and one as *tsure*), and this would be indicated

in the program with the variation *ren-jishi* (accompanying *shishi*). The dance in this version (which is the source for the Kabuki play *Ren-jishi*) is quite different, and the play as a whole is of greater weight or dignity.

The sample program shows the names of players of all four instruments, but in a number of Noh the *taiko* is not used, and in the program the name of the flute player is centered beneath the names of the other two drummers.

The head of the chorus sits in the second row, to the left or right of center depending on the school. He is the most important member and his name is often shown in the program even when the names of other members are omitted.

In the printed program the titles of both the Noh and the Kyōgen plays are set in the same size type, and the font is the same for the names of all the performers except the chorus, *kōken* and *tsure*. This is another indication that the star system does not operate in Noh: there is no "top billing."

### THE PROCESS OF CREATION: THE TASKS OF EACH PERFORMER

In Part III, I will explain and illustrate the interlocking systems by which all these performers work together to create each Noh play. Here I would like to mention two points about their interaction: the lack of rehearsals and the kinds of pieces they perform.

**Expected Spontaneity** Unless a new, extremely difficult, or rarely performed play is to be given, Noh performers do not conduct stage rehearsals but meet and discuss briefly or talk through, in the dressing room, any changes or variations. This is not because Noh actors are lazy; they begin at a young age the many years of strict training necessary to master the repertoire. They know the piece to be performed and how their parts should be coordinated, and they do not rehearse together precisely because there is no guarantee that what is produced in joint rehearsals can be reproduced on the day of the performance. In other words, what is valued in Noh is the kind of beauty generated by the spontaneous and unpredictable harmoniz-

## THE MODERNITY OF NOH

"This is so beautiful, so timeless, that I am moved to tears." These were the words uttered by the renowned German architectural theorist Bruno Taut (1880-1938) when he first saw the Katsura Detached Palace. It was not simply the reaction of an ordinary European coming to the mysterious Oriental country of Japan and encountering the exotic beauty of the East. As a modern architect, Taut looked with a professional eye and saw with great sensitivity "why" it was beautiful. The clean, straight-line composition; the raised-floor post-and-beam construction; the multipurpose space; the Mondrianlike patterns of light and dark produced by the dark wood of the columns and crossbeams and the white of the walls and door panels; the dynamic zigzag of the layout of the whole—this was the fresh architectural beauty he must have discovered. No doubt he was astonished by the wonderful modernity that existed in Japanese architectural traditions.

Taut went on to produce a book on the rediscovery of Japanese beauty, which caused a sensation not only in the Japanese architectural community but also in many other fields as well. Japanese began to discover modern values in their inheritance. The modernity of a culture always lies within its traditions, and the refined modern eye can seek it out.

There have also been reports that when Noh was first performed in Europe the many contemporary composers and dramatists assembled for the event reacted in a chorus of utter surprise. Their reaction was similar to Taut's, though perhaps a bit less generous. They seemed to be astonished and a bit unhappy to have it illustrated to them in such a vivid form that the concept of "modern" for which they were groping had long since been anticipated and realized in the Noh drama.

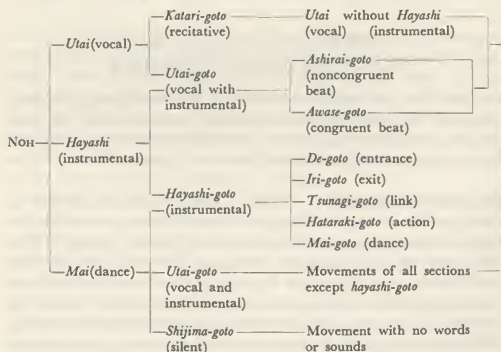
Noh can be compared to avant-garde music in several respects, and these are evident in the various experiments that attempt to liberate music from the spell of simply reproducing an existing score and to return to music the elements of improvisation and chance. We see musicians striking string instruments, for example, or producing complex, intermittent harmonics on wind instruments designed to play lovely melodies, and in some cases we even find instrumen-

ing of a combination of performers who come together to produce a given play only once, rather than the polished recreation by a carefully coordinated group effort. Here again we see the pursuit of an aesthetics of discord.

Each performer brings all of his technical and expressive powers to an encounter with the art of the other performers and thereby expends all his energy in the single performance, relying for the highest artistic achievement upon a coincidence that may seem almost divine.

This means that even if the same performers give the same Noh play two days in a row, the performances will be quite different. Herein lies the charm and beauty of Noh. If Noh were performed at the direction of a producer, a single mind, of necessity several times in a row, then the performers would be reduced to mere technicians, and the Noh itself could be at best the "greatest common denomina-

**Table 16. Types of Vocal, Instrumental, and Dance Pieces**



NOTE: The three elements are intimately interrelated, with instrumental central to vocal and dance

tor," rather than a brilliant and spontaneous encounter of artistic wills.

**Types of Performance** Before we begin our discussion of performance techniques, I would like to show the different kinds of pieces that are performed—just what the performers must do, in other words. (Table 16) The three major elements of Noh are chant, instrumental music, and dance, which are subdivided and related as shown in the table. (These elements will be elaborated upon in the discussions of vocal and instrumental music in Chapter 12 and of dance in Chapter 13; how they are combined is described in Part III.)

## THE MUSIC OF NOH

### *Utai and Hayashi*

The music of Noh is music of *ma* performed in accordance with the principle of *jo-ha-kyū*. The reasons for this lie in an aesthetic consciousness that traditionally perceives time on an incline, and the paradoxical idea that the body of the music exists in the negative, blank spaces generated by the actual sounds.

Five elements or "voices" (*go-sei*) constitute Noh music—the melodic vocal music of the chant (*utai*), and the rhythmical music of the four instruments (*hayashi*): the flute (*fue*), the small drum (*ko-tsuzumi*) held on the shoulder, the large drum (*ō-tsuzumi* or *ō-kawa*) held at the hip, and the stout drum (*taiko*) played with drumsticks. In addition to these five elements, other sounds are sometimes used: the dancer stamps in rhythmical patterns, using the stage as a percussion instrument; the Kyōgen dancer as Sambasō rhythmically shakes a set of small bells; in the Gaku dance of the Noh *Dōmyō-ji*, the *shite* beats with a mallet, building excitement.

The music of Noh is an invocation and a requiem, the rhythms calling forth a ghost that dances a dance of prayer for its own repose.

### VOCAL MUSIC

The vocal music of Noh, chanted or spoken, is called *utai*. *Utai* is a kind of *uta*, a song or poem. The word *uta* can be written with at least

seven different characters, and the character used for *utai* is also pronounced *yō* and seen in the words *min'yō* (folk song) and *kayō* (old-style popular song), but the word *utai* as used in Noh has its own special meaning: it refers both to the element of song that moves the story along, setting scenes and providing psychological depictions of the characters, and to the way of singing.

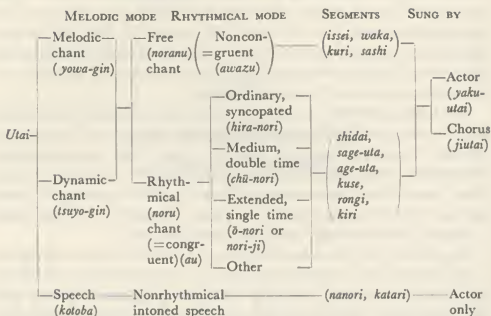
The language of *utai*, in the classical literary style of the Muromachi period called *sōrō-bun*, consists of nonrhythmical prose, nonmetered chanted verse, and metered chanted verse. The nonrhythmical, nonmelodic prose (*kotoba*) is always delivered by an actor, and the verse, metered or nonmetered, is chanted either by an actor (*yaku-utai*) or by the chorus (*jiutai*), in either the gentler melodic mode (*yowa-gin*) or the stronger dynamic mode (*tsuyo-gin*).

In principle, all *utai* consists of phrase units (*ku*) of twelve syllables, a hemistich of seven syllables followed by a hemistich of five syllables. This form arose from the long tradition of Japanese poetry and also appears in children's songs and folk songs. The physiological advantage may be as great as the literary precedent: sung in a standard melody and at a standard tempo, a unit of twelve syllables can usually be managed comfortably in one breath.

The melodic and rhythmical forms of *utai*, with examples of *shōdan* of each type, are shown in Table 17. I will discuss the elements of the table in detail below and refer to it frequently. Note that non-metered verse is chanted in a regular way but does not match the beats of the instrumental music, and thus can be called noncongruent (*hyōshi awazu*), while the different *nori* shown for the metered or congruent (*hyōshi au*) verse refer to the way in which the twelve syllables of chant are matched to the measures of eight beats.

The melody is made up of small melodic units called *fushi*. The way these are combined—the method of composition, in other words—is called *fushi-zuke*. Rather than setting the words to music, the melody is set to the text. The word *fushi* (or *bushi*) is also used in Japanese to mean a type of song, but in Noh it means a melodic unit that is combined with others to produce a song.

**Voice Production** There is a traditional set of classifications of voice production: *ō* (horizontal)—strong, firm voice; *shū* (vertical)—delicate, gentle voice; *shūgen* (felicitous)—voice expressing felicity

Table 17. The *Utai* of Noh

(became dynamic mode); *bō-oku* (yearning remembrance)—voice expressing sadness and pathos (became melodic mode).

These classifications are based on subjective, emotional criteria, however, and give us no concrete indication of pitch or physiological description of voice production. Noh is chanted in the natural voice (*ji-goe*), never in the falsetto (*ura-goe*) used in Kabuki and other Japanese dramatic arts. The voice is always produced with diaphragmatic breathing, reverberating through the chest and head, and resonating within the oral cavity, so it seems intense and "swallowed" in comparison to the clear, "projected" voice of Western singing. The difference is most evident in chant in the dynamic mode. In addition to natural vibrato, there is an ornamental whole-note trill called *nabiki* (flutter).

**The Benefits of *Utai*** Many amateur students enjoy learning *utai* not to perform as part of Noh but simply to sing for the appeal of its traditional melody and interesting stories. This plain, unaccompanied chant (*su-utai*) is sung in the free rhythm, not in matched rhythm as it would be in Noh, and it can be chanted by anyone,

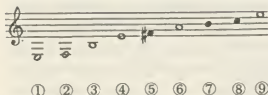


anywhere, at any time. Indeed, its practice is thought to be good for the health. There is a saying, "Five years for *utai*, ten for *hayashi*," but an interested amateur can usually learn enough about the *fushi* notation and voice production to manage reasonably good *utai* within about one year. Some people actively encouraged the practice of *utai*, with a list of its "Fifteen Virtues." Among its benefits, it is said, are that it enables one to know distant places and their people without actually traveling; to know the martial arts without training and battle without fighting; to know poetry without learning and to appreciate nature without actually writing verse; to know the power of the gods without praying and the compassion of the Buddha without austerities; to know the pain of separation without losing a loved one and to love without suffering through infatuation; to know the past without aging; to know ecstasy without medicinal herbs; and to elevate oneself by engaging in elegant conversation with nobility. I cannot say whether they realize all these benefits, but tens of thousands of students across Japan do sing *utai* regularly.

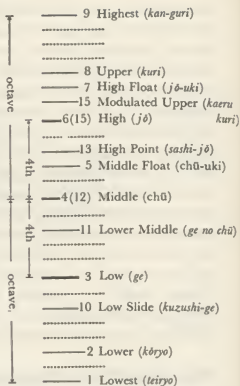
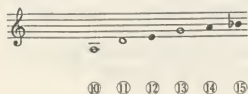
***Yowa-gin: Melodic Mode Chant*** Singing in this mode (literally weak singing; also called *jū-gin*, or soft singing) is used for passages expressing elegance or pathos. It has a recognizable melody with fixed pitches that can be shown on a Western staff. The melody may seem complex on first hearing, but in fact its basic skeleton is quite simple, similar to folk lullabies: subtle modifications, pitch changes, and expansion or contraction of the *ma* are carried out for purposes of heightened artistic expression. Pronunciation is also altered to temper particularly harsh or sibilant sounds and to render sounds that are hard to hear more understandable.

The scale used in *yowa-gin* consists of three axial or base pitches a perfect fourth apart, called Low (*ge*), Middle (*chū*), and High (*jō*), and a fourth pitch, Upper (*kuri*), a minor third above High; there are also a number of auxiliary pitches to which the singer rises or dips temporarily before returning to a base pitch. These are shown in Western notation in Figure 48 as an aid to understanding, even though the basic conception of *utai* is not of twelve evenly divided half-steps. The heavy solid lines show the base pitches, the light solid lines the auxiliary pitches, and the dotted lines the pitches only passed through in flourishes. As chant in the melodic mode, *utai* both rises

Basic scale:



Modulated scale:



48. The Noh scale.

and falls in perfect fourths, and in the dynamic mode, at unspecified pitches; this differs fundamentally from Western music, in which there is a scale of notes of equal value that are combined serially and in chords to produce both melody and harmony.

This system of high-middle-low describes not only pitches within each melodic line but also the pitch at which an entire section of chant, or *shōdan*, is sung. A section of *age-uta*, or high song, always begins on the high pitch and ends on the middle, and *sage-uta*, or low song, always begins on the middle pitch and ends on the low.

The range of pitches spans two octaves (from E below middle c to e above c''), an upper range above the Middle pitch and a lower range below, but nearly all *utai* is sung within about an octave and a half, and this can be considered the basic scale.

The tonality in *utai* is not absolute (it is not necessarily G, as shown in Figure 48), but is determined by the performer. The intervals,

however, are fixed, and a basic scale can be shown on a staff as in Figure 48, in a typical key. The base pitches appear as open notes, the auxiliary as closed. For each basic scale or tonality there is also a modulated scale. *Utai* is always modulated down one whole tone, and the modulation is carried out with the change in *shōdan*. Thus, for the basic scale in G, the modulated scale is F. The word *kaeru*, to change, is used to indicate where this modulation should occur.

Within the *shōdan*, moreover, the chant is often modulated or broken (*kuzusu*) temporarily to emphasize an important spot in the text. These brief modulations are handled differently in the upper and lower ranges. In the upper range they are used in the opening part of such *shōdan* as the *sashi* (point) or *kake-ai* (recitative), beginning on a pitch one whole tone lower than High (*jō*) and hence called the Point High (*sashi-jō*), and returning to the basic key upon dropping to Middle (*chū*). In the lower range, on the other hand, the return to the original key comes at the point when the melody rises to the middle pitch.

In addition to modulation of entire sections from the basic scale to the modulated scale (*kaeru*) and temporary modulations of short sections for emphasis (*kuzusu*), there may be a modulation of the basic scale from major to minor, with the lowering of certain pitches a half-tone to express sadness or despondency. This is called *merasu* (to destroy).

It is always the performer who determines how high the base pitches will be. Traditionally, the nature of the play and the type of role are also taken into account. A female role would, for example, be sung in a higher key than a male role.

THE COMBINATION OF MELODIC UNITS      Let us now examine the *fushi*, melodic units that are combined to make up the melody of the chant. Each *fushi* is an instruction regarding both the pitch and the duration of the syllable: it indicates a change of tone, a certain embellishment pattern, the number of beats the syllable is to be held, and so forth. The text is written vertically and the *fushi* notation to the right of the text. There are three basic types of *fushi*: *sugu* (direct)—the sesame-seed-shaped dots that make up the matrix of the melodic notation. One seed indicates a duration of a half-beat (or one full beat in the *ō-nori* rhythm pattern); *hiki* (draw)—indicates that the syllable is held, with no change in pitch; and *mawashi* (turn)—

indicates a change of pitch as the syllable is held. In principle these basic *fushi* are applied one per syllable. Other *fushi* are then added to these to indicate changes in base pitches.

There are also two special types of *fushi*: *hashiri* (run)—used only with the *ō-nori* rhythm pattern, a line drawn through the seed dots indicating a doubling of tempo (i.e., one half-beat per syllable); and *yuri* (quaver or trill)—an embellishment, a set melody consisting of a string of basic *fushi*, always used on the final syllable of a *shōdan*. There are the *mitsu-yuri* (triple trill), *han-yuri* (half-trill), and *hon-yuri* (true or basic trill), a combination of these.

The melody of a portion of *utai* can thus be described by first specifying the mode of chant (melodic or dynamic) and then indicating the combination of basic, special, and pitch-change melodic units. This could be shown as a formula:

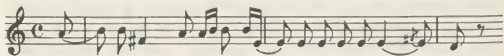
$$\text{melody} = \text{mode (basic + special + pitch-change)}$$

An overall description of a section of *utai* can be given by identifying the melody and the rhythmic mode (congruent or noncongruent; if congruent, by which *nori*, or system of matching twelve-syllable lines of text to eight-beat measures, it is divided):

$$\text{utai} = \frac{\text{melody} + \text{rhythm pattern}}{\text{mode}}$$

Please refer to the diagram of forms of *utai* (Table 16).

Let us look at a number of specific examples of *fushi* used for a line of text in the play *Hagoromo*. Note that the symbols and the degree of detail of notation vary with the school of Noh, but this example is complete. This standard twelve-syllable line comes at the end of the *kuse* section, and it can be shown (approximately) on a staff as follows:



Ha - - ro - o    a - ra - shi ni - - ha - na fu - ri - te - - - n

Taking the text line illustrated above, let us consider the meanings of all of the *fushi* used in detail. The line from the poem is:

*Haroo arashi ni hana furite*

In a sweeping gale, the blossoms fall

The line, as it appears in the *utai-bon* of one of the schools, can be seen below, and explanations of the various *fushi* follow.

	Text	Fushi	
ha-	拂	(1) <i>goma-bushi</i>	seed
ro-		(2) <i>haru</i>	swell
		(3) <i>u (uki)</i>	float
o	小	(4) <i>o (oroshi)</i>	drop
a-		(5) <i>i (irodoru)</i>	color
ra-	荒		
shi			
ni	に	(6) <i>mitsu-hiki</i>	triple draw
ha-	花	<i>sageru</i>	lower
na			
fu-	降	(7) <i>a (atsukai)</i>	special treatment of pronunciation
ri-	り	(8) <i>irodori</i>	color
		<i>nomi</i>	glottal nasalization
te		(9) marks end of phrase unit ( <i>ku</i> )	
(n)	り	(10) <i>ya-a</i>	rhythmic notation

1. This is the basic *goma-bushi*, or sesame-seed mark. Notice that its tilt is always significant.

2. *Haru* (to swell), when written beneath a level seed mark indicates a swelling elevation of the voice. This instruction, used when the preceding note is lower than the High (*jō*) pitch, means that the phrase should begin at (or return to) the High pitch.

talists shouting out in ways suggestive of the principle of silences and spaces called *ma* in Noh.

These trends clearly indicate a move away from the present melody-centered music toward a rhythm-centered music. This may seem to be a return to the primitive, but it would be overly hasty to focus only on points of similarity, via the medium of primitive music, such as the shouts of instrumentalists or the predominance of rhythm, and thereby to conclude that Noh has a modern element. This is an important observation, perhaps, but it is not a conclusive factor. What we must do, rather, is to focus on the possibility of a liberation from restrictions and an achievement of spontaneity.

As we will explain in detail later, the *utai-bon*, or chant book, serves as both script and score for the actors and chorus, and, combined with the various scores for the instrumentalists, comprises a total system of rules of performance that regulate all playing, singing, and dance. Thus, Noh can be performed smoothly without conductor, director, or producer, and despite the powerful spell—approaching stylization—of the system of rules, the true character of the Noh performance is that it seeks a method of creation that transcends mere reproduction and that it strives for artistic enhancement by the sophisticated random effect produced by the group consciousness of the performers.

In many ways, this resembles the architectural procedures followed in the construction of the traditional Japanese house, which is built without a designer (to the surprise of many non-Japanese). The thick floor mat, or *tatami*, is the basic unit of architectural space. It measures about three feet by six feet. Two *tatami* make up one *tsubo*, and land is measured in *tsubo*. If one knows how many *tsubo* of land are involved and how the house is to be oriented, then a number of house plans automatically suggest themselves and one is chosen. No detailed design plans are ever needed. From a simple sketch of the layout of the rooms (each measured by the number of *tatami* mats: four-and-a-half, six, eight, ten, and so on), the chief carpenter determines the positions of the columns and quickly gets an image of the overall structure. The materials and working time needed for each aspect of construction are determined, and a standardized work plan is thus completed. Similarly, in Noh, the artistic integrity of each specialist's "performance" is maintained, its

㇏ 3. *U*, from *uki* (float), in this case indicates an ascent to the High Float (*jō-uki*) pitch; affixed to the Middle (*chū*) pitch, it would indicate a rise to Middle Float (*chū-uki*).

㇏ 4. *O*, from *otoshi* (drop), when written beneath a downward tilting seed mark with a dot beside it indicates a temporary drop in pitch, in this case, to Middle Float (*chū-uki*). Since it symbolizes only a temporary drop when not followed by further *fushi*, this marking means that the next note must return to the base note (in this case, High) on the next syllable. In addition, if this melodic indication did not have the large black dot beside it, it would represent merely a back down to High on this return from the preceding note on High Float syllable, without the drop to Middle Float.

イ 5. *I*, from *iro o tsukeru*, or *irodoru* (to add color), is an instruction to color the note with a turnlike embellishment without changing the note's basic pitch.

㇏ 6. This combination of symbols is made up of: a seed mark tilting downward with a line drawn with three strokes underneath it; this represents a *mitsu-biki* (triple draw), which means that the note should be extended. Beneath this is the character for "descend," which indicates that the pitch must be lowered to the Middle pitch in this example. When this *fushi* is used, the singer should drop the pitch just after beginning to sing the syllable. Here, the preceding note is a High Float, so the drop is to the Middle pitch; however, were the preceding note itself of Middle pitch, the drop would be to Low.

㇏ 7. *A*, from *atsukau* (treat), indicates that the singer should perform a certain vocal embellishment entailing no change in pitch; it is rather a special pronunciation of the syllable for dramatic purposes. The downward tilt of the seed mark means that the pitch should undergo a very slight and fleeting depression.

㇏ 8. This is a combination of the *i* coloring (see number 5 above) and a *nomi* (swallow, or glottal)-*bushi*, one of the turnlike (*mawashi*) *fushi*. The vowel sound "e" is reiterated and then

swallowed and nasalized into “ng” as it is dropped to the Low (*ge*) pitch. In this case, the syllable “te” receives two full beats.

- 9. The circle at the end of the phrase unit acts as a period at the end of a sentence. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence grammatically. This circle serves the same function as a half rest musically. It is here that the singer takes a breath.

- ✚ 10. This final symbol is not concerned with the melody; it is a rhythmic notation instructing the singer to begin the next phrase on the second beat of the following measure. This notation is called *ya-a no ma*, or the “space” in which the hip drum player cries, “*Ya-a!*”

***Tsuyo-gin: Dynamic Mode Chant*** Chant in this strong mode (also called *gō-gin*) is used for passages expressing excitement, bravery, or solemnity. In contrast to *yowa-gin* with its recognizable melody, *tsuyo-gin* swells and recedes within a much narrower range of pitches. It is based upon rhythm, and although theoretically it moves through the same base pitches as the melodic mode, in practice the High and Middle pitches are the same, so, with Low, there are only two pitches. It might be called a conceptual melody, brought about by changes of level or intensity rather than melodic rises and falls. The melodic notations, *fushi*, are mostly the same as those for *yowa-gin*, although the effect is very different. It is possible to show the dynamic mode as a scale of pitches, but I believe it is in fact misleading and confusing, since it exists more as a scale of intensity than tonality.

Those unfamiliar with Noh music do not always hear the beauty of chant in this mode. There are Japanese who refer to the singing of Noh *utai* as “groaning,” no doubt their impression of monotonous repetition of discordant sounds created by unskillful rendering—to put it bluntly—of dynamic mode chant. This is an indication of just how nonmelodic this mode is and how great the danger for the unskilled of lapsing into howling. I think it is fair to say that a greatly refined musical technique is required to master this style of *utai* and bring its beauty and power to life.

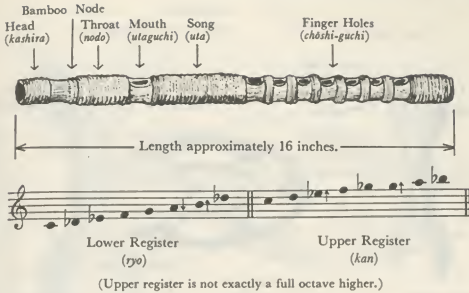


**Kotoba: Intoned Speech** In contrast to the passages of verse sung in either the melodic or the dynamic mode of chant, *kotoba* are prose passages, such as the *waki*'s speech of self-introduction, delivered in a nonrhythmical way. In the *utai-bon* there are no *fushi* seeds next to these lines, and they cannot be considered melodic, but they are intoned with a full voice in a rather stylized manner. The patterns vary somewhat with the type of role, but in most cases the sentences are divided by an opening (*hiraki*) into two parts, the first part spoken with a gradually rising tone, the second rising to a peak and then falling off. Speech passages are not distinguished by modes and are given only by an actor, never by the chorus.

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The instrumental music of Noh is usually called *hayashi*. It is sometimes called *noh-bayashi* to distinguish it from the *hayashi* of Kabuki-style singing, festival music, and the like. It may also be called *shi-byoshi*, or "four rhythm-makers." The *hayashi* of Noh is a highly developed rhythm-centered musical form, and it has great potential for opening new musical fields in compositions that use its unique qualities to the fullest. Its true mission, however, is to lead the development of the play in concert with the vocal music, and to create a dynamic rhythm as pure instrumental music, thereby giving artistic life to the dance of the performer. Thus, it is very different from mere background music or accompaniment and occupies a particularly important place in Noh.

The Japanese sense of music has traditionally been focused more on rhythm than on melody, and there is very little use of harmony. In contrast to hunting peoples elsewhere in the world whose music began, we are told, with the discovery that they could make sound by twanging a bow, the farming ancestors of the Japanese began with a percussion instrument: they dug a hole in the earth, put boards over it, and stamped to make sounds, and this was called *dudubii* (believed to be the origin of the modern word for drum, *tsuzumi*). This preference for percussion instruments over string instruments necessarily strengthened the tendency towards a rhythmical music of sounds dividing time rather than a melodic music of sounds flowing through time,



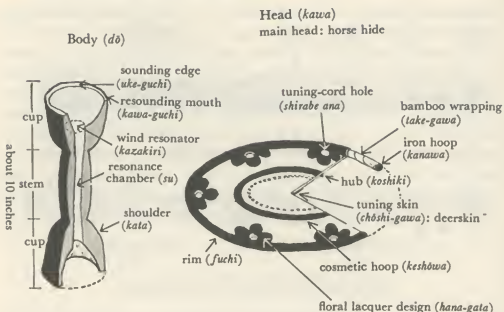
49. The Noh flute (nohkan).

and from this the unique music of Noh developed. We might call it a world of monochromatic sound.

This focus on rhythm permeates the Noh musical sense: it is created by three drums and just one flute, and even this melodic instrument is considered a percussion instrument, as is apparent in the other name of the *hayashi*, the *shi-byōshi*, which also means the "four beats."

### The Instruments

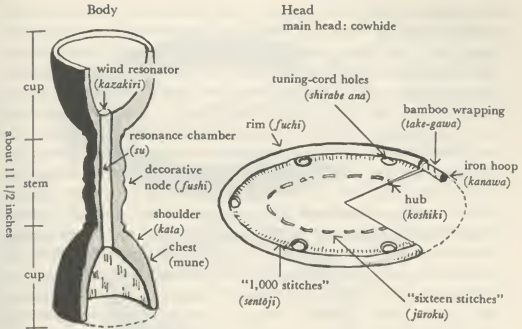
*Fue*: The flute, properly called the *nohkan*; it is the only wind instrument (Fig. 49). It is a transverse flute with seven finger holes, and it differs from other traditional transverse flutes, such as the *ryūteki* of Gagaku or the *shinobue* used in festival music. The player places it against the chin, holding it out to the right and supporting it with both thumbs and whichever fingers are not being used, and he produces sound by blowing across the mouthpiece (*uta-guchi*, literally song-mouth) and covering and uncovering the finger holes. The *nohkan* is not a single piece of bamboo but a pipe constructed of eight to twelve strips of narrowly split bamboo, bound with a slender vine such as wisteria and lacquered on the inside. A unique feature of the *nohkan* is the throat (*nodo*), a plug of beeswax and lead inserted inside



50. The Noh shoulder drum (ko-tsuzumi).

the flute between the mouthpiece and the head; there is usually an intricately carved gold finial inserted in the wax and visible as a decoration at the head of the flute. The flute music may be gently melodic or rhythmically and almost eerily shrill, and there are many slides and ornamental trills rather than a series of precise pitches. Like *utai*, flute music can be played without drums, with the drums in congruent rhythm (called *awase-buki*), or at the same time as the drums or chorus but in noncongruent rhythm. This unmatched "companion" playing (*ashirai-buki*) is used to embellish the melody of the vocal music as well as to express the state of mind of the main character. The pitch of the flute music is not absolute, and in fact each *nohkan* is slightly different in length. It is never played with other wind instruments, and when it is played in combination with *utai* there is no attempt at harmony.

**Ko-tsuzumi:** The small or shoulder drum (Fig. 50). The construction of all three drums is basically the same, although there are minor differences in size or shape. Two heads of animal skin stretched on a metal rim, each with an outer vibrating skin and an inner reverberat-



51. The Noh hip drum (ō-tsuzumi).

ing skin, are positioned on either end of a hollow, wooden, hourglass-shaped body (*dō*) and held in place with orange-colored hemp cord laced through holes along the rim of the head. This basic assembly is called a *tsuzumi*. The *ko-tsuzumi*, the smaller of the two hand-held Noh drums, is played by grasping the tuning cords (*shirabe*) with the left hand, holding the drum up at the right shoulder, and sounding the drum by striking it with the right hand. What is unique about this drum is that the pitch and timbre can be changed by varying the tension exerted on the cords with the left hand as well as by changing the number of fingers on the right hand used to strike the drum. The shoulder drum skins are of horsehide with a smaller circle of deerskin, called the tuning skin (*chōshi-gawa*), affixed to the inside. This affects the pitch. For the best sound, the *ko-tsuzumi* skins should not be too dry, so during a performance the drummer will frequently apply bits of saliva-wetted paper (*chōshi-gami*) to the back skin or breathe on the front skin to keep it moist.

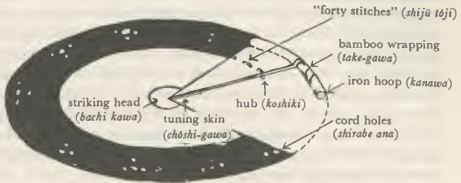
*Ō-tsuzumi*: The large or hip drum (Fig. 51), also called the *ō-kawa*, or large skin. This drum makes a sharper, higher sound and does not

have variable pitch. For about an hour before the performance, its cowhide skins are heated on both sides over a small brazier to make them as dry and tight as possible, and they are then fixed firmly on the body. Cosmetic tuning cords are added. To play the *ō-kawa*, the drummer grasps the cords (at a spot called the *kojime*) with his left hand, rests the drum on his left thigh, and sounds it with his right hand, which is swept dramatically out to the right before the beat. The head and rim are very hard, so the index and middle fingers of the right hand are protected with paper sheathes held on with rice starch glue and the palm with a small piece of leather. Rather than changes in pitch or tone, variations in the strength of the beat and the duration of the resonance constitute the *ō-kawa* music. As we mentioned earlier, there is no conductor in Noh, and in plays without a *taiko*, when the actor enters, exits, or performs actions of nondetermined duration, it is the responsibility of the *ō-kawa* to signal to other performers, with special beat patterns, where to conclude the accompanying instrumental music.

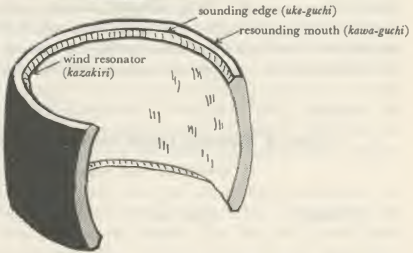
*Taiko*: This drum (Fig. 52), with a short, thick body, is played with two drumsticks. Like the *ō-tsuzumi*, it is of fixed pitch. The two large heads are placed on the barrel-shaped body, laced vertically, and then wrapped horizontally. The stick drum is considerably larger than the two hand drums. It is suspended in a stand (*dai*) set on the stage floor and sounded (never "hit") with beats by the simple dowellike drumsticks on a small circle of deerskin affixed to the middle of the upper head. The drummer creates sounds either by striking gently and holding the sticks against the skin so that it does not reverberate, or by bouncing the sticks with varying force (strong, medium, gentle) and allowing the skin to reverberate. The skins are of horsehide, like those of the shoulder drum (*ko-tsuzumi*), with a tuning skin affixed to the underside of the head. The sound of the horsehide heads of the shoulder drum and stick drum improves with use, but the cowhide heads of the hip drum (*ō-tsuzumi*) can only be used a limited number of times.

The *hayashi* players sit at the back of the stage facing forward. In formal Noh performances, the shoulder and hip drummers sit on folding stools and the flute and stick drum players sit on their knees directly on the stage; in abbreviated performances, all the instrumentalists sit on the stage floor.

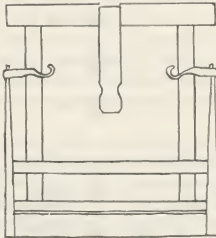
Head



Body



Stand  
(taiko-dai)



52. The Noh stick drum (taiko).

**Hayashi Notation Systems** The instrumental music of Noh consists of a number of fixed melodic and rhythmic patterns or pieces combined differently, in accordance with a set of rules, for each segment of each play. The *hayashi* player knows the system of patterns and rules and thus does not need a complete score for each play. There are notation systems for the drum and flute music, which show the sounds, patterns, and combinations of patterns for different pieces. Here we will describe those notation systems, and in Part III we will discuss the interlocking systems of music, motion, costuming, and space that make up Noh plays.

**FLUTE NOTATION** The melodic patterns comprising flute music can be sung or written out in a system called *shōga*, in which the phonetic symbols for the notes making up each of the thirty or forty flute pieces are written on a simple grid showing the beats of

**Table 18. Fingering Charts for the Noh Flute**

I. The Melodic Unit: *o-hya-i-to*

left hand	right hand	name of note
● ● ●	● ● ○ ●	<i>o</i>
● ● ○	○ ○ ○ ●	<i>hya</i>
● ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ●	<i>i</i>
● ● ●	● ○ ○ ●	<i>to</i>

II. The Highest and Lowest Notes

● ○ ●	● ○ ○ ●	<i>hishigi</i> (highest)	in the upper register ( <i>kan</i> )
● ● ●	● ● ● ●	<i>tsutsune</i> (lowest)	in the lower register ( <i>ryō</i> )

the measures. (These syllables can also be sung, as solfeggio, when necessary.) There are also fingering charts, called *yubi-tsuke*. Table 18 below shows the fingering for one pattern of four notes (*o-hya-i-to*). The solfeggio-like mnemonic system, it should be noted, is not limited to the *nohkan*—it is familiar to Japanese from flute music used in festivals. In Noh, even the dancer learns the solfeggio patterns for the long instrumental dance as *shōga*.

Although there are only seven holes and no keys on the Noh flute, a great variety of sounds are produced by different combinations of fingerings. Every note has a name: the highest (*hishigi*) and the lowest (*tsutsune*) are shown in the fingering chart. There are two registers, produced by blowing with different force and at a different angle. The upper register is called *kan* (closed), and the lower, *ryo* (dilated). The scales of the two registers are shown in Figure 49. In principle, the upper and lower registers of wind instruments are a full octave apart, but in the *nohkan* the frequency is somewhat lower. Moreover, the pitch of each note can be varied by half a tone by changing the angle of the chin, and, as was mentioned, each flute is of a slightly different pitch.

**DRUM NOTATION** The score of the patterns of beats for the three percussion instruments in the Noh orchestra consists of a combination of dots, circles, and triangles that look like grain, *tsubu*, arrayed on a measure grid; thus this score is called the *tsubu-tsuke*. Table 19 shows the symbols used.

These sounds are grouped into rhythmical units called *te* (hand), and then these units are grouped into set combinations or patterns called *te-gumi*. There are about 170 commonly used *te* for the shoulder drum, 200 for the hip drum, and 100 for the stick drum, so of course, the number of different combinations of these many units is enormous. A score showing the rhythm patterns (for all three drums) is called *te-tsuke*.

The melodic vocal and flute music are sometimes performed within or matched to a fixed rhythmical framework (congruent) and sometimes performed in free rhythm (noncongruent), and this fixed grid of the rhythms created by the drums consists mainly of units of eight full beats or sixteen half-beats. The basic beat form (*nori*) may be standard, syncopated, or double-time. The shoulder and hip drums



individual character is brought to life, and the result is a heightening of the element of chance discovery or combination in the "construction" of a performance. Indeed, we can call this a forward-looking systematic work method worthy of respect.

There is also great originality in the manipulation of space in Noh. The Noh stage is both a multipurpose and a universal space, and these are qualities valued in modern architecture. The term "multipurpose space" applies to a room that, for example, is used as a living room or dining room in the daytime and as a bedroom at night. It is a space that can be changed by time and moveable furniture. The term "universal space" refers to space that can be expanded or contracted by, for example, removing door panels or setting up screens. Of course both of these ideas about the use of space have been a familiar part of daily life in Japan for hundreds of years, and Japanese who have grown up in traditional houses may be surprised to learn that such use of space is considered the very embodiment of modernity. In Noh, too, dramatic space is manipulated not boldly with great sets but subtly with portable properties, or *tsukuri-mono*, such as a few pieces of bamboo tied together to represent a hut or a simple frame to represent a boat.

In Japan, architecture is considered a limited, specialist's field, but in Europe and the United States, it is thought to be on the same level as literature, art, and music, so it is not surprising that Westerners look at Noh not only from the narrow perspective of music and drama but also from the perspective of its use of space, which they find astonishingly modern.

Nowadays space is often described as positive or negative. Negative space is enclosed and fixed, and positive space is the space taken up by people or things that define a negative space by their presence. Both kinds of space exist in Noh: negative space (*ma*) is the stillness and emptiness just before or after a unit of performance; positive space is produced by stage properties and by the dramatic activities of performers—it even includes the audience. The two kinds of space are connected by time. The lack of a curtain makes possible the special negative space of Noh. A Noh program continues uninterrupted for a whole day. While there may be empty, or "negative" time, there will never be unsubstantial, uncreative, or uncreated time.

Although the above descriptions have been given in an attempt



Stick drum	Hip Drum	Shoulder Drum	Flute
( <i>taiko</i> )	( <i>ô-tsuzumi</i> )	( <i>ko-tsuzumi</i> )	( <i>nohkan</i> )

54. *The Noh orchestra.*

As the photograph of performers (Fig. 54) shows, each instrument has its own directionality. The flute music flows off to the player's right, the shoulder-drum player beats up, the hip-drum player beats left, and the stick-drum player beats down, so we are made aware of space even in the creation of sounds.

## THE RHYTHMS OF NOH

Music begins when we impose an artificial order on the rhythm of nature and add the element of sound. When human beings first grasped the concept of rhythm, they must have begun with an even-number orientation based on our two-legged gait, and thus the even number two is the basis of all rhythm. With the addition of man-made odd-number rhythms, richer musical expression became possible. Despite the harmony of discord and inclination toward odd-numbered

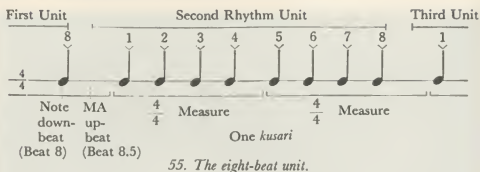
constructs in many aspects of Noh, only a very few instances of odd-numbered rhythms exist in the music. The reason for this is the unique structure of Noh rhythm.

**The Rhythmical Structure** In Noh music, eight beats constitute one unit or *kusari* (chain). Considered in light of the principles of *jo-ha-kyū* and music theory, however, one *kusari* can properly be described as a pair of two distinctive half-measures. It could be shown in Western musical notation as two common time measures (with one beat per quarter note).

The music of Noh is essentially rhythmic music, created by percussion instruments, as opposed to essentially melodic music, a constant flow of sounds with duration created by wind and string instruments. This rhythmic music is made up of intermittent sounds, so of course times without sound, not accompanied by rests, are generated. These live blanks are the *ma*, and the unique understanding on which Noh music is based is that each quarter-note full beat of time actually consists of an eighth note of sound (*omote-byōshi*: the downbeat, or positive time) and an eighth note of *ma* (*ura-byōshi*: the upbeat, or negative time). Moreover, the body of the rhythm lies in these negative *ma*, just the reverse of the usual concept of rhythm, and the accent moves from the upbeat or half-beat to the downbeat or full beat, that is, from weak to strong. This means that while each *kusari* extends from beat 1 to beat 8.5 each rhythmic unit begins on the final *ma* (beat 8.5) of the preceding measure and ends on beat 8 of the measure being played. Thus, the rhythm units are not simply adjoined but rather connected in the form of a chain. This may sound complicated but can be understood more easily if one refers to Figure 55 and to the diagrams of the eight-beat units that follow.

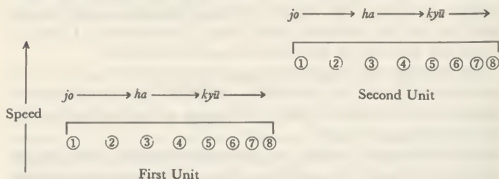
Noh rhythm, with a *ma* for each sound and a shift of accent to the silent upbeats, might be described as a rhythm of syncopated staccato sounds. This is why each rhythm unit begins on the final half-beat of the preceding rhythm unit.

While beating out rhythms, the drummers alternate calls, *kake-goe*, with beats on the drums, and these calls are what support the rhythm of negative spaces. To Japanese, these meaningless syllables may resemble the nonsemantic cries and flourishes of folk songs, but (as Table 27 illustrates), the Noh *kake-goe*, in accordance with set principles,

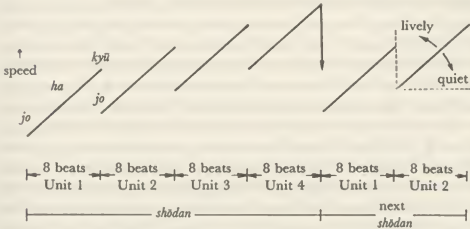


always come on the upbeat, creating the rhythm and preceding the drum sounds. We might even say that although a body of music consists of instrumental sounds, in Noh drumming the calls make up the body of the music and the percussive sounds serve merely as auxiliary dividers. This is clear from the fact that the more sophisticated a performance, the greater the degree of abbreviation of the drum sounds. All Noh performers consider the *kake-goe* an extremely important part of the musical expression.

**The Unique Nature of the Rhythm** The rhythm of Noh, as we have already seen, treats time on an incline in accordance with the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* and favors a harmony of discord. This means following the fluid rhythm of life and avoiding mechanical arrangement. It can be illustrated simply as in Figure 56 below:



Within each measure the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* applies, and the tempo increases as the *ma* are gradually contracted. The principle also applies to a series of measures, so while the tempo drops back to *jo* on the first beat of the next measure, the measure as a whole will be slightly faster. This process could also be illustrated as a series of lines (Fig. 57).



57. Jo-ha-kyū within each measure (II).

There is an acceleration from *jo* through *ha* to *kyū* within each unit and across the series of units constituting each segment of music (*shōdan*), making a sawtooth pattern. There is always a return to quiet at the conclusion. With the progression through *jo-ha-kyū* there is not merely an increase in speed but also a change in the whole impression of the rhythm: as the *ma* are contracted a feeling of excitement is engendered (and the line in the drawing approaches the vertical); with a slowing there is a return to a peaceful feeling. This makes Noh music fundamentally different from Western music, in which beats are given equal value and *accelerando* is used only occasionally for emphasis or expression. Noh music is music of acceleration in each unit, each segment, each act, each play, each cycle of plays. The principle of *jo-ha-kyū* establishes a rhythmical base; onto this are added a variety of units to heighten interest, emphasizing the lyrics, varying the rhythms, and expanding or contracting the *ma*, especially in sections of psychological or emotional description. If, through

errors in judgment, this twofold flexibility of timing exceeds certain bounds, then the rhythm is quickly destroyed and the flow of time rendered chaotic. The manipulation of *ma*, therefore, is a difficult and delicate art. The way in which *ma* is manipulated in Noh is called *nori*.

The word *nori*, literally "ride," is used in a narrow sense in Noh to refer to one of three basic rhythmical modes or methods of matching melody to a beat. These modes are somewhat analogous to 3/4 (waltz time) or 2/2 (tango), and I will describe them later. The word is also used in a broader sense to describe the way the music "rides" the beat. When the use of *jo-ha-kyū* is deftly reflected in the music of a particular play, we say the *nori* is good; when the rhythm grows too violent, the *nori* is excessive; when it is too flat or monotonous, the *nori* is bad. In this sense it is a measure of rhythmicality. *Nori* is distinguished from tempo: a play about an aged warrior and a play about an old woman might both be given at a slow tempo, but the *nori* would be different, the warrior play with a sense of action within the quiet and the woman play with a sense of stillness within the quiet. Every play has its own *nori*, whatever the tempo.

**The Prescription of Tempo** In Noh music there is no absolute prescription of tempo, no indication of how many beats should fall per minute. In the chant book, which is script and score, we find such words as *sarari* (lightly), *shikkari* (steadily) or *shittori* (softly), but these give only a general idea of the mood, serving more as notes than as specifications. How do the performers know how fast a piece is to be given? This is determined by what is called *kurai*. The word means level or degree, and in Noh *kurai* is always a relative concept. *Kurai* as applied to the tempo of a piece is used in three senses: (1) type (of character); (2) quality (of mask and robes); and (3) position (of play in program). Let us examine these in more detail.

(1) The *kurai* of the main character The characters of different plays can be compared and categorized and the tempo of the piece set accordingly. Among third-category Noh plays, for example, a play about a young woman (*Yuya*) would be given at a slightly different speed than a play about an old man (*Yugyō Yanagi*), the latter of course being slower. *Kurai* in this meaning determines tempo on a commonsense basis, ranking plays by characters.

(2) The *kurai* of the quality or elegance of masks and robes When a mask or robe of greater dignity is used, the tempo of the piece is slowed. *Kurai* in this sense modifies the *kurai* in the first sense.

(3) The *kurai* of a play This is determined by the play's position in the five-play construct governed by *jo-ha-kyū*. As we have seen, tempo does not necessarily correspond to the level of *jo-ha-kyū*, but the subject category of a play must be taken into consideration in the setting of tempo.

What determines the tempo, as I have said, is the *kurai*. If one examine the three senses of this word, one comes to understand that ultimately it is the standard performance time of each play that determines the tempo. The *kurai* divides and allots this time among the structural elements (*shōdan*) of the play, and *kurai* determines the tempo applied to the actor, who gives shape to the *shōdan*. The actor analyzes and categorizes on the basis of the *kurai* of the *shite*, corrects his decision according to the *kurai* of the costume, and, taking the *kurai* of the play into consideration, makes an overall determination concerning the tempo of a given performance. In Noh, in other words, rather than faithfully executing a fixed tempo of beats per minute throughout a play, thereby creating a standard performance time, performers take the opposite route: they use the total performance time to set the tempo of each section.

We might say that Noh, the cooperative creation of the unified wills of the performers combining the tempo of many subsections, must be completed in a fixed time.

*Kurai* also, as might be expected, is created by the way *ma* are manipulated. If the *ma* are too far apart, the *kurai* is too slow and slack, and if too close together, too rushed. Either extreme kills the interest in a play. When the pace is too slow, the criticism is that the *kurai* is too heavy; when too fast, the *kurai* is too light. When the order of the words is reversed, however, the meanings change: heavy *kurai* means solemn, both in feeling and in tempo; light *kurai* means lighthearted.

I hope it is clear from this discussion that while tone and pitch are important, the three elements that really determine the character of Noh music are *ma*, *nori*, and *kurai*.

It may seem strange that the tempo of Noh music is maintained with such vague guidelines, but in fact any given play is performed by different combinations of actors and musicians with only slight variations

(2) The *kurai* of the quality or elegance of masks and robes When a mask or robe of greater dignity is used, the tempo of the piece is slowed. *Kurai* in this sense modifies the *kurai* in the first sense.

(3) The *kurai* of a play This is determined by the play's position in the five-play construct governed by *jo-ha-kyū*. As we have seen, tempo does not necessarily correspond to the level of *jo-ha-kyū*, but the subject category of a play must be taken into consideration in the setting of tempo.

What determines the tempo, as I have said, is the *kurai*. If one examine the three senses of this word, one comes to understand that ultimately it is the standard performance time of each play that determines the tempo. The *kurai* divides and allots this time among the structural elements (*shōdan*) of the play, and *kurai* determines the tempo applied to the actor, who gives shape to the *shōdan*. The actor analyzes and categorizes on the basis of the *kurai* of the *shite*, corrects his decision according to the *kurai* of the costume, and, taking the *kurai* of the play into consideration, makes an overall determination concerning the tempo of a given performance. In Noh, in other words, rather than faithfully executing a fixed tempo of beats per minute throughout a play, thereby creating a standard performance time, performers take the opposite route: they use the total performance time to set the tempo of each section.

We might say that Noh, the cooperative creation of the unified wills of the performers combining the tempo of many subsections, must be completed in a fixed time.

*Kurai* also, as might be expected, is created by the way *ma* are manipulated. If the *ma* are too far apart, the *kurai* is too slow and slack, and if too close together, too rushed. Either extreme kills the interest in a play. When the pace is too slow, the criticism is that the *kurai* is too heavy; when too fast, the *kurai* is too light. When the order of the words is reversed, however, the meanings change: heavy *kurai* means solemn, both in feeling and in tempo; light *kurai* means lighthearted.

I hope it is clear from this discussion that while tone and pitch are important, the three elements that really determine the character of Noh music are *ma*, *nori*, and *kurai*.

It may seem strange that the tempo of Noh music is maintained with such vague guidelines, but in fact any given play is performed by different combinations of actors and musicians with only slight variations



in total performance time. This is perhaps the strongest evidence that the long training and accumulated experience of Noh performers serve to turn apparently abstract theories into concrete realities.

## TWO FORMS OF MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

All musical pieces for which instruments are used can be divided into two categories: *utai-goto*—pieces made up of vocal and instrumental music, and *hayashi-goto*—pieces of instrumental music only.

In the music of Noh, three to five sound sources in apposition create extreme disharmony through a desperate conflict, and each source is considered an important element in the creation of the music.

The function of the instrumental music in Noh is never accompaniment. In the instrumental pieces (*hayashi-goto*), of course, this is apparent, but even in the pieces in which it joins the chant (*utai-goto*), the *hayashi* is always playing cooperatively or even competitively. This is quite obvious to anyone who has had the opportunity to see or hear Noh, and an awareness of it is essential for an understanding of Noh.

As the musicians perform, they constantly communicate to one another (1) in what kind of rhythm, (2) at what tempo, and (3) what beat in the measure they are now playing—leading the dancer and singers and providing them with clear information and notice of intentions. (The signals include special beat patterns by the drummers, extra or omitted stamps by the dancer, and the like.) Noh is ultimately directed and conducted by the group of performers on stage, and there is no one corresponding to a director, producer, or conductor. The responsibilities and jurisdiction of each performer are established by convention, and each performance is given its unique characteristics by the cooperation and tension engendered by the plurality of wills.

***Utai-goto: Vocal-Instrumental Pieces***      *Utai* is the general term for all of the Noh text: speech, melodic mode chant, and dynamic mode chant. (Please refer to the diagram of forms of *utai*, Table 17.) The word *utai-goto* refers to sections of a play consisting of chant combined with instrumental music. The chant is sung either in



matched rhythm with the *hayashi* or at the same time as but independent of the rhythm of the *hayashi*. Thus *utai-goto* are subdivided into: *ashirai-goto*: companion pieces of prose chant in noncongruent rhythm with the instrumental music, and *awase-goto*: matched pieces of verse chant in congruent rhythm with the instrumental music.

The *ashirai* pieces are sung with the emphasis on the meaning of the text and the melodic line. There is no ground beat (*ji-byōshi*) regulating which syllable falls on which beat. In these pieces there is noncongruent accompaniment by the flute (*ashirai-buki*) to embellish the chant and heighten the mood and by the drums (*ashirai-uchi*) to establish *ma* in a way that is nonrhythmical but in harmony with the chant. The word *ashirai* means accompaniment.

The *awase* pieces are sung with a ground beat coordinated with the drum-beat framework. The flute plays in noncongruent rhythm while the drums match the chant and create various rhythms. There are three basic ways in which the syllables of the text are matched to the framework of beats, and these forms are called *nori*.

**RHYTHM FORMS: *Nori*** In *awase-goto*, the verse chant, usually in twelve-syllable lines, is matched to the eight-beat metrical units within one of three rhythm systems: *hira-nori*, *chū-nori*, and *ō-nori*, and the portions of chant sung in these forms are called, respectively, *hira-nori ji*, *chū-nori ji*, and *ō-nori ji*. (Please refer to the diagram of the eight-beat units and the three samples in Table 20).

*Hira-nori*, or regular rhythm, is the basic form used in most *awase-goto*; it is a kind of syncopated pattern in which twelve syllables are matched to eight beats. In *hira-nori*, no syllable falls on beats 1, 3, or 5, an indication of an effort to avoid making the form too rhythmical; in theory this is possible, but awkward word divisions sometimes necessitate the singing of a syllable on one of these beats.

*Chū-nori*, or medium rhythm, is a kind of double time, with two syllables of chant per beat. In principle, the first syllable of each line of chant comes in on beat 1 (called *ataru ya no ma*), half a beat behind the start of the rhythm unit, and the line is finished within one eight-beat unit. Because of its lively quality, this form is used for battle descriptions in Warrior (*shura*) Noh and so is also called *shura-nori*. *Hira-nori* and *chū-nori* are so closely related that they are often referred to as *namibyōshi* or "equal rhythms."

*Ō-nori*, or large rhythm, is a grand rhythmical form in which one

syllable is sung per beat. It may appear to be a simple doubling of *chū-nori*, but the rhythm is handled in a completely different way, called *nori-byōshi*. The line of chant begins, in principle, on beat 2 (*ya-a no ma*). This pattern is frequently used in fantasy plays, in the concluding section or before and after the dance.

Table 20. The Eight-Beat Measure

## I. Three Methods of Matching Syllables of Chant

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Beat Number								
i	...	ro	ha	ni	...	ho	e	to	...	chi	ri	nu	ru	o	.	Hira-nori
i	ro	ha	ni	ho	e	to	chi	ri	nu	ru	o	wa	ka	yo		Chū-nori
i	—	ro	—	ha	—	ni	—	ho	—	e	—	to				Ō-nori

## II. The Names of the First Four Beats

8	1	2	3	4	Beat Number
半 声	△ ヤ	ヤ ア	ヤ ラ	△ ヤ ハ	Symbol
<i>honma</i> (no symbol)	<i>ataru ya</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>ya-a</i>	<i>ya-o</i>	Beat Names (These names are derived from the drummers' calls.)

The symbols, placed at the end of a line of chant in the libretto, instruct the singer on which beat to begin the next line. Where no symbol is used (*honma*), the singer takes the standard beginning on beat 8.5.

These are the main rhythm patterns but there are others, including *watari-byōshi* (cross-beat), a combination of *hira-nori* and *ō-nori*. It is important to note that all of them are theoretical and subject to variation in performance.

**ADJUSTMENT OF THE RHYTHM** Verse consisting of alternating lines of seven and five syllables is considered the most lyrical and elegant form for the Japanese language, and is seen in poetry down through the ages, especially in *haiku*, *tanka* (or *waka*), and *renga*. In Noh, too, of course, there are large sections of this delicate, evocative verse, but naturally there are also instances where prose is called for, or where the single verse form is too limiting for expression or depiction. Thus, two methods of adjusting rhythm are used in order to accommodate lines of more or fewer than twelve syllables, as well as to prevent monotony in the rhythm and to allow greater freedom in the creation of the melody. These adjustment methods are always used in tandem.

One method is to use measures (time units) of irregular lengths: an eight-beat measure, the standard unit, called *honji*, which can be varied with: a two-beat measure, called *okuri* (send); a four-beat measure, called *tori* (take); a six-beat measure, called *kata ji* (one-sided measure); a seven-beat measure, called *kata-okuri*, which has a very limited use; or the nine-beat measure, called *yotsu ji*, which also has a very limited use.

The other method of adjusting the rhythm and the text is to begin singing the line of chant on a nonstandard beat. Normally in *hira-nori*, the line of chant begins on beat 8.5 of the preceding unit. This standard beginning is called *honma*, or basic timing. In sections of congruent chant in the *utai-bon*, where there is nothing but a period at the end of a line, the singer knows to begin the next line on beat 8.5. However, there are names for each beat from beat 8 of the preceding measure through beat 3.5 of the measure under consideration, and the symbol for beat 2 (*ya-a no ma*), for example, appearing at the end of a line instructs the singer to hold the last syllable of that line through beat 1, rest on beat 1.5, and begin singing the next line on beat 2. The names of the beats and the symbols used in the chant book are shown in part two of the eight-beat measure diagram in Table 20.

Please look back to the sample of a line in a chant book, shown in

to explain the inherent "modern" nature of Noh, this book essays to achieve an ordinary comprehension of what it is that is commonly understood as "modern." Modern eyes view things from an international point of view in extremely broad areas of investigation, as though through a wide-angle lens. However, even from such a perspective, one can find nothing "new" upon analyzing Noh or retracing its history. In fact, Noh can perhaps be given its most timely, most appropriate interpretation not by scholars of literature or drama but by those who are deeply concerned with the present such as scientists architectural designers, or systems engineers.

### EXPERIENCE, NOT APPRECIATION

Noh is an event to be experienced directly and personally. It is not a panorama like opera or Kabuki, aimed at a large group of spectators in a one-way process. Thus a person who goes to see Noh has certain responsibilities. A different drama is created for each member of the audience because Noh effects a direct exchange between the hearts of the performers and of each spectator. Each person, not the audience as a group, has an intense, private encounter with the performer. A serious I-thou or self-other relationship of this kind cannot be repeated, so a Noh play is never performed in long runs: a given actor will perform in a given play with a given group of performers only once on any given day.

This is similar to the idea in the tea ceremony that any ceremony can be encountered only once in one's lifetime. In this respect, Noh is often compared to tea; the performer is like a tea master, the members of an audience like the guests. The two gather at the theater or tearoom and share space and time through the medium of giving a play or serving tea.

### LACK OF STARS

In ordinary naturalistic drama, an hour of the play corresponds to an hour of life (though perhaps divided up in a way that real life cannot be), and there is no room for the viewer to interrupt or partici-

Figure 46. This line is twelve syllables long, so it is fit to the *honji* or standard measure in *hira-nori* and it is sung beginning on the standard beat (*honma*), or beat 8.5 of the preceding measure. Even so, the syllable *a* in "*arashi ni*" is sung half a beat off (in order to enhance the word sense), and the syllable *ni* is held (indicated with a *hiki-fushi* or draw notation). Moreover, the final syllable of the line, *te*, does not end on beat 7.5 but is changed and held (indicated with a *mawashi-fushi*, or turn notation), because of the drum patterns, the melody, and the relationship to the number of syllables in the next line. The *ya-a* symbol at the bottom of the line, to the left of the text, indicates that the next line should begin on beat 2. This can be shown on an eight-beat unit score as in Table 21.

Table 21. The Basic Meter of Noh

Beat Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>Honma (honji);</i> Begin this line on beat 8.5	Ha — ro o — a- ra- shi- ni — ha- na fu- ri- te- e							
<i>Ya-a no ma;</i> Begin next phrase on beat 2	n — n ○							

ACTUAL AND THEORETICAL RHYTHM MATCHES *Hira-nori*, the basic rhythm form in which verse chant is matched to the drum-beat patterns, can be sung in two ways, as *tsuzuke-utai* or *mitsu-ji utai*. *Tsuzuke* and *mitsu ji*, literally "continued" and "triple-ground," are the names of hip and shoulder drum patterns. In *tsuzuke-utai*, syllables of text are held over extra beats where necessary to conform to the regular pulse of the drums (see Table 20a). The framework of beats of equal duration is strictly maintained and such music-centered sections are called *noru ji*. In *mitsu-ji utai*, the chant proceeds rhythmically and in coordination with the drums but with no holding of



As the table shows, the number of the syllables in the line is coordinated to the number of the beat in the measure. In *noru ji*, this is accomplished by stretching some syllables and in *noranu ji*, by condensing the time of some beats. *Noranu ji* is distinguished from non-congruent chant because the theoretical rhythm framework is maintained: hypothetically, syllable five falls on beat 3, syllable eight on beat 5, syllable eleven on beat 7, and a rest on beat 8, even though these eight beats actually take only six and one half beats of singing time. Thus, it can be said that *noru ji* has an actual rhythm and *noranu ji* a theoretical rhythm. It becomes clear that congruent verse chanted with instrumental music in *hira-nori* style consists of a combination of passages in actual music-centered rhythm and passages in theoretical text-centered rhythm.

shite —————

jō (Begin on High pitch.)

toru (use 4-beat measure.)

ya-o-ha [no ma] (Begin next phrase on beat 3.5.)

sarari (lightly)

text notes on pronunciation of characters

fushi (melodic notation)

okuri (Use 2-beat measure.)

ji [utai]: chorus

ya-a [no ma] (Begin next phrase on beat 2.)

NOTE: This same text is shown on the Eight-Beat Score in Table 23.

58. A sample of hira-nori from the kuse of Funa Benkei.

Table 23. *Hira-nori*—A section of the *kuse* scene of *Funa Benkei*

[illegible]



Table 24. *Chū-nori*—A section of the *kiri* of *Yashima*

length of measure	Begin line on beat:																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8									
(name)	(# beats)																
honji	ru	—	•	fu	na	i	ku	sa	no	...	ka	ke	—	hi	—	ki	ya-a (2)
honji	•	u	—	ki	i	shi	zu	mu	to	...	se	shi	ho	...	do	ni	ataru ya (1)
honji	—	i	•	ha	ru	no	o	yo	no	na	mi	yo	ri	a	ke	te	ya-a (2)
honji	•	ka	ta	ki	to	mi	e	shi	wa	mu	re	i	ru	ka	mo	me	ataru ya (1)
honji	—	•	to	ki	no	ko	e	to	—	—	ki	ko	e	shi	wa	—	ya (1.5)
honji	•	u	ra	ka	ze	na	ri	ke	ri	ta	a	ka	ma	...	tsu	no	ataru ya (1)

Table 25. *Ō-nori*—A section of the *kiri* of *Hagoromo*

length of measure																		
name		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		Begin line on beat:
(# beats)																		
honji				—		—		—		a		—		ma		—		ya-o no ma (2.5)
honji		mo		—		—		u		...		ra		ka		ze ni		ya-o no ma (2.5)
tori		—		ki		—		ta		—		na		—		bi		honma (8.5)
honji		ku		—		—		.		mi		—		ho		—		ya-o no ma (2.5)
honji		—		ra		—		—		u		...		ki		shi ma ga		honma (8.5)
honji		—		—		.		a		—		shi		—		ta		ya-a no ma (2)

*Examples from Plays* To clarify the differences between the three *nori* or rhythm forms, I will analyze samples of text sung in each of these forms. The sample of *hira-nori* that follows (Fig. 58) is from the *kuse* scene of the play *Funa Benkei*. The section of text is shown as it appears in the chant book and then written out on an eight-beat score as *noru ji* (Table 23). In the chant book notation, as I explained above, the text is written vertically, with the melodic notations (*fushi*) to the right of the text. One sesame seed dot equals a half-beat in *hira-nori* and *chū-nori* and a full beat in *ō-nori* (with extensions as necessary to fit the rhythm form), and a vertical line through the seeds indicates a halving of that time value (called *hashiri*). The word *au* or *awazu* at the head of a line indicates congruent or noncongruent chant. In sections of congruent chant (*au*), the singer uses *hira-nori* unless *chū* or *ō* is specified; standard eight-beat measures (*honji*) unless an irregular unit (*tori*, *okuri*, etc.) is specified; and standard timing on line beginnings (*honma*) unless an irregular starting beat (*ya-a*, *ataru ya*, etc.) is specified. In addition to the sample of *hira-nori*, we show samples of *chu-nori*, from the *kiri* section of *Yashima* (Table 24), and *ō-nori*, from the *kiri* section of *Hagoromo* (Table 25), written out on the eight-beat score. On the three eight-beat scores, the name of the type of measure appears at the left and the name of the beat on which to begin singing the line appears at the right. The mark ... means that the vowel of the preceding syllable is held to match the rhythm (*umiji*); - means that the vowel is held as part of the melody (shown with a draw *fushi* in the chant book), and ° indicates the end of a line, a half-beat rest. Underlined syllables are given a melodic accent.

**Hayashi-goto: Instrumental Pieces** The word *hayashi* refers to the instruments and instrumental music in general, and the word *hayashi-goto* refers to pieces of music consisting of instrumental music only. It is also sometimes used in a narrower sense to refer to the long dances (*mai*) performed to instrumental music. Most of these pieces are used in many different plays, and they can be divided into six categories: (1) entrance pieces for the *shite* or *waki* (Table 26), (2) exit pieces (Table 27), (3) linking pieces that provide a transition between events on stage (Table 28), (4) descriptive pieces that evoke a mood of danger, insanity, excitement, or battle while the *shite* moves about the stage (Table 29), (5) dance pieces for the main

Table 26. Entrance Pieces (*Iri-goto*)

Title of Piece (Translation)	Contents	Instruments
<i>Shin no Raijo</i> (Formal Entrance)	stately entrance of emperor, etc.	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Haya fue</i> (Rapid Flute)	lively entrance of dragon, etc.	
<i>Deha</i> (Emerging Point)	rhythmical entrance of nonreal <i>shite</i>	
<i>Sagari-ha</i> (Trailing Edge)	dancelike entrance of sprite, fairy	
<i>Ō-beshi</i> ( <i>Ō-beshimi</i> mask piece)	energetic entrance of <i>tengu</i>	
<i>Ranjo</i> (Wild Introduction)	mystical entrance of <i>shishi</i> (lion-dog)	
<i>Netori Rei Waki</i> (Tuning for the <i>Waki</i> )	stately, ritualistic entrance of waki	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Shin no Issei</i> (Formal One Voice)	entrance of incarnation of a god, alternately lively and quiet	
<i>Issei</i> (One Voice)	standard entrance piece	
<i>Shidai</i> (Next in Order)	quiet entrance of man, woman, or incarnation	
<i>Nanori-bue</i> (Name-saying Flute)	quiet, lyrical entrance of male character	flute only

Table 27. Exit Pieces (*De-goto*)

Title of Piece (Translation)	Contents	Instruments
<i>Nakairi Raijo</i> (Withdrawal Music)	stately withdrawal of character between acts with light entrance of <i>kyōgen</i>	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Haya Tsuzumi</i> (Rapid Drum)	rapid change scene as character disappears	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Okuri-bue</i> (Send-off Flute) ( <i>Ō-yuri</i> ) (Large Trill)	flute solo as <i>shite</i> withdraws between acts	flute only

Table 28. Linking Pieces (*Tsunagi-goto*)

Title of Piece (Translation)		Contents	Instruments
<i>Monogi no Ashirai</i>	(Costume-Change Music)	music for transformation of character by change of robes	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Ayumi no Ashiai</i>	(Walk Music)	music for strong, stately walk	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Ashirai-dashi</i>	(Burst of Emotion)	music showing loneliness of a woman overwhelmed with melancholy	shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Shōmon no Ashirai</i>	(Pine-Gate Music)	lonely flute solo	flute only

Table 29. Descriptive Pieces (*Hataraki-goto*)

Title of Piece (Translation)		Contents	Instruments
<i>Mai-bataraki</i>	(Dance-Work)	depicts threat or attack by dragons, demons	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Inori</i>	(Prayer)	depicts struggle between priest and demon	"
<i>Iroe</i>	(Coloring)	depicts suppressed emotion	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, (stick drum)
<i>Tachimawari</i>	(Moving About)	depicts wandering	"
<i>Kakeri</i>	(Flight)	depicts desperate state of mind of lunatic or warrior	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Kirikumi</i>	(Slash after slash)	depicts battle scene	"
<i>Notto</i>	(Invocation)	incantatory rhythm of shoulder drum	"

Table 30. Dance Pieces (*Mai-goto*)

Title of Piece (Translation)		Contents	Instruments
<i>Shin no Jo no Mai</i>	(Formal Slow Dance)	dignified dance of an aged god or elegant goddess	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Jo no Mai</i>	(Slow Dance)	quiet dance of a beauty, old woman, angel, or flower	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, (stick drum)
<i>Banshiki Jo no Mai</i>	(Slow Dance in High-Pitched Mode)	lively dance of a beauty, old woman, angel, or flower	"
<i>Chū no Mai</i>	(Medium Dance)	gentle dance of a woman, spirit of flower, or butterfly	"
<i>Ha no Mai</i>	(Moving Dance)	light, short dance of woman or angel	"
<i>Hayamai</i>	(Rapid Dance)	flowing dance of ghost of aristocrat, enlightened woman	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Ōshiki Hayamai</i>	(Rapid Dance in Low-Pitched Mode)	sad, fast dance of man	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Otoko Mai</i>	(Male Dance)	strong dance of gallant warrior	"
<i>Kakko</i>	(Drum Dance)	dance with special rhythms	"
<i>Kami Mai</i>	(God Dance)	strong, fast dance of young male god	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Gaku</i>	(Music)	dance of Chinese, sage, derived from Bugaku	"
<i>Kagura</i>	(Shinto Dance)	dance of goddess or shaman, from shrine ritual	"
<i>Shōjō Midare</i>	(Intoxicated Sprite's Dance)	wine-loving sprite frolics in waves	"
<i>Sagi Midare</i>	(Heron's Dance of Rapture)	joyous dance of white bird in sky	"
<i>Shishi Mai</i>	( <i>Shishi</i> Dance)	exciting dance of mythical lion-dog	"

NOTE: In the Instruments column of the charts above, parentheses around "stick drum" indicate that in some Noh that instrumental piece is played with-

out *taiko* (called *daishō-mono*) and in some it is played with all three drums (called *taiko-mono*).

Table 31. Unique Instrumental Pieces

Title of Play	Title of Piece	Contents	Instruments
<i>Okina</i>	<i>Senzai no Mai</i> (Senzai's Dance)	rhythmical dance of the young man Senzai	flute, three shoulder drums
	<i>Okina no Mai</i> (Okina's Dance)	prayer-dance of old man become a god	"
	<i>Okina-gaeri</i> (Okina's Return)	Okina's exit	"
<i>Sambasō</i>	<i>Momi no Dan</i> (Dance of Joy)	joyful dance with stamps and leaps	flute, three shoulder drums, hip drum
	<i>Suzu no Dan</i> (Bell Dance)	prayer-dance with shaking of bells	"
<i>Dōjō-ji</i>	<i>Ran-byōshi</i> (Wild Stamping)	slow dance with special stamping, wild drumbeats and cery <i>kake-goe</i> to create tension	flute, shoulder drum
	<i>Kyū no Mai</i> (Urgent Dance)	rapid dance of delusion	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum
<i>Kiyotsune</i>	<i>Koi no Netori</i> (Love Tuning)	special flute solo showing phantom of love from other world	flute
<i>Tomonaga</i>	<i>Sembō</i> (Comforting Law)	music offering solace by the Bodhisattva Kannon	flute, shoulder drum, hip drum, stick drum
<i>Funa Benkei</i>	<i>Nami-gashira</i> (Wave Crest)	music depicting the raging sea surrounding boat	shoulder drum, hip drum

NOTES: There are two versions of the Gaku Dance, in the *Ōshiki* (low-pitched) and *Banshiki* (high-pitched) modes. There are three types of the *Shishi Dance*, as used in the plays *Shakkyō*, *Mochizuki*, and *Uchito-mōde*.

The Noh plays with the dances listed above from *Shin no Jo no Mai* through *Kami Mai* are collectively referred to as *mai-mono* or dance plays; plays with the *Gaku* dance are called *gaku-mono*; plays with the *Kagura* are called *kagura-mono*.

pate. The development in a Noh play, however, is quite free and transcends time and space: the emphasis is on evoking human emotions rather than on progressing through a series of events, and the viewer is quite free to project himself into the mind and heart of the protagonist at any time. Because the focus is not on a series of events that bring the figure of the actor into relief, Noh does not respond to the popular need for heroes. There is no relationship between stars and fans in Noh, nor should there be, for there are no stars. One cannot experience Noh if one watches it obsessed with every little act performed by a certain actor: to do so is foolishness; it is yearning after an image one has in fact created in one's own mind, which can only hinder an artistic experience of a higher level.

I am astonished, therefore, at the number of Noh critics who write about "so-and-so's Noh" or that "so-and-so's dance is particularly beautiful," focusing on individual actors as if they were writing movie reviews. Clearly this sort of writing has meaning for a very limited number of people, and I question whether those who write this way understand the true character of Noh. A Noh play is given life only through a sharing of the wills of all performers, each anonymous. I venture to say that the only real stars are the characters born on the stage.

### SEEING NOH AS IF FOR THE FIRST TIME

To best experience Noh, one should respond emotionally rather than observe intellectually. One must, in the famous phrase of Zeami, "Never forget the beginner's mind." Someone coming into contact with Noh for the first time may be ignorant of the names of schools or performers, unfamiliar with the text, only vaguely aware of an outline of the plot. If one approaches the play naively, and this does no harm, what would one's impression be?

The chorus chants in unison in a way that seems to reach into one's soul. This contrasts with the sharp vibrations of the drums and the eerie calls of the drummers. The melody of the flute seems to represent the state of mind of the character, and the character's heart reveals itself through a mask that seems to have an infinite number of expressions and through beautifully choreographed move-

dance by the shite (Table 30), (6) special pieces used for certain plays.

In the list of instrumental pieces (Tables 26–31), you will find the Japanese name of the piece, a literal English translation, a description of the contents of the piece, and a list of the instruments used to play it. Note that the drums always play in congruent rhythm, *awase-uchi*, maintaining a framework of beats of equal value, and that the flute can play either the congruent *awase-buki* or the noncongruent *ashirai-buki*.

**The Function of the Drummers' Cries** Noh music is given its special flavor by the *kake-goe*, meaningless syllables called out by the drummers before certain beats. The cries serve to lead the rhythm and also to make clear the beat number of each percussive sound—that is, who is currently on what beat in the measure. The drummers establish an appropriate mood for the play and create a sense of the rhythm with subtle variations in the strength of the voice and the timing of the cries. One drummer may signal to the other players with strong, short cries, for instance, that he wants to increase the tempo. The *kake-goe* is an important musical element, and we might say it compensates for the lack of a conductor. The cries are used not only in instrumental pieces but in vocal-instrumental pieces as well.

The cry is emitted, in principle, on the half-beat (*ma*) preceding a percussive sound on the downbeat. There are four basic types:

*Ya* comes on the half-beat preceding beat 1 or beat 5, marking the beginning of each half-measure. It is sometimes pronounced *ya-a*.

*Ha* comes on the half-beat preceding beats 2 or 3 and 6, 7, or 8 and is sometimes pronounced *ha-a*. (These two calls are written with the phonetic characters for *ya* and *ha*, but in practice their pronunciation is closer to *yo* and *ho*.)

*Iya* comes mainly on the half-beat before the odd-numbered beats. It marks the end of a rhythmical subsection.

*Yoi* is an extended cry that begins on beat 2.5 and lasts 1 beat through beat 3 to beat 3.5. It signals the intent to conclude a series of drum patterns (*te-gumi*). Occasionally it is centered on beat 5, and it may be pronounced *yo-o-i* or *yo-i-i*.

It should be evident that the cries are not auxiliary to the drumbeats; rather, they come first and serve to call forth the percussive sounds, giving shape to the rhythm.



In order to illustrate how the four *hayashi* instruments are combined, I have presented below (Table 32) composite scores for a short section of the Medium Dance (*chū no mai*), one score showing the basic patterns in the traditional notation systems for the drums and flute laid out on an eight-beat grid, and the other showing the same section in Western musical notation. In examining these scores, please note the following:

(1) This is the series of patterns (*te-gumi*) that comes at the conclusion of a section (*dan*). The players have been repeating patterns for several measures and must now coordinate the conclusion, signaling as described below.

(2) In the second half of the first measure, the stick drum player changes from nonreverberating to reverberating beats, signaling to the other players, "Here comes the end of the section!"

(3) Hearing this signal, the hip drum player stops playing the ground pattern (*ji*), and from the beginning of the second measure stops emitting cries and begins playing the gambit (*shikake*) pattern, which comes at the conclusion of a section.

(4) Then the shoulder drum begins in the middle of the second measure to play the rounding off (*musubi*) pattern, which leads to the end of the section.

(5) The flute player, having heard this series of changes, knows to end the section in the third measure.

(6) Thus in the third measure each instrument plays the appropriate concluding pattern: the stick drum moves from *uchikiri* to *kashira*, the hip drum plays *uchikiri*, the shoulder drum plays *ashirai*, and the flute plays *ryo*, bringing the *dan* to an end.

## ABBREVIATED PERFORMANCES OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Noh is a composite stage art with dramatic unity, in which the structural elements of chant, dance, and instrumental music are combined with the skillful use of masks, robes, and properties for the telling of a story on stage. However, many of the elements of the dance and the vocal and instrumental music may be performed in abbreviated form.

Table 32. Composite *Hayashi* Scores for a Section of *Chū no Mai* in Japanese and Western Musical Notations

太鼓	笛	小鼓	大鼓	太鼓	笛	小鼓	大鼓	太鼓	笛	小鼓	大鼓	太鼓	笛	小鼓	大鼓	楽名
				頭	呂	アシライ	打切	上げ・打切	千ノ中	ムスビ	シカケ	刻	干	甲長地中ヨリ	地	手
イヤー				ヤ				ヤ				ヤ				8.5
1				△ハ				1				1				1
				ヨヒヤ				ヒ				ハン				2
				ラ				ウル				ヲ				3
				ヤ				ヒニ				ヒヤ				4
				イ				ヤ				ラ				5
				イ				イ				イ				6
				ホ				ヒヒヨ				ハ				7
				ウ				イ				ウ				8
				ホッヒ				イウリ				ハ				8.5
				ハ				ハ				ヤ				
3 クサリ目				2 クサリ目				1 クサリ目				拍数				

NOTES: Basic flute patterns (*shōfu*), drum patterns (*te*) and drummers' calls (*kake-goe*) are shown combined on an eight-beat score (*yatsuware*) and also on a Western staff. When looking at the scores, please remember the following:

1. In the stick-drum notation, ㊦ indicates a loud beat made by raising the left stick to the shoulder. The phonetic symbol *ka* inside the circle stands for *kata* (shoulder).

2. The drum scores show cries and drumbeats on half-beats (*ma*) and full beats, but the flute score also shows sounds between half-beats, i.e., in quarter beats. Moreover the flute pattern for each measure begins on beat 2 (*ya-a no ma*) or beat 2.5 (*ya-o no ma*).

3. The series of patterns (*te-gumi*) shown would normally appear in one vertical line in the drum scores. We have divided by measures to facilitate labeling of patterns.

Hip drum: (ya) han ha ya ha  
 Shoulder drum: (ya-a) han ha-a ji ya ha  
 Flute: o hya - ra - i hi u - ya  
 Stick drum: ya-a kan ha ha  
 kizami

Hip drum: shikake  
 Shoulder drum: ha ya musubi  
 Flute: hi u ru hyu i hi hyo i u ri  
 Stick drum: ya-a kan no chū ha-a  
 age, uchikiri

Hip drum: ha yo-i iya  
 Shoulder drum: uchikiri ya-a ha  
 Flute: o hya - ra - i - ho u hou hi  
 Stick drum: yoi- ya ro ha-a iya-a  
 kashira

$\text{♩} = 66/\text{min.}$  ↑ elevate pitch slightly ↓ depress pitch slightly

We might think of these as sketches and of Noh as the oil painting. For these excerpts, costumes and masks are not worn, and the only property used, in principle, is the fan. The performers wear traditional formal clothing: black silk kimono with the family crest and long stiff divided skirts. On rare occasions they may wear *kami-shimo*, extremely formal matching vests and long trousers. They enter and exit through the small *kirido*, not by the bridge. These excerpts of Noh music and dance are interspersed among the full Noh in professional performances. A descriptive list of these sketches follows:

*Su-utai* (plain chant): the text of an entire play sung by one or more people. If there are several singers, the roles may be divided and the chorus sections sung either by all or by a professional chorus.

*Rengin* (group singing): especially important or moving sections of a play sung by a group of chanters.

*Dokugin* (solo singing): important or moving parts of a play sung by one person.

*Katari* (recitation of a tale): solo recitation of the *katari* (tale) section from a play.

*Ban-bayashi* (one-play *hayashi*): a full play given with just the chant and the instrumental music.

*Mai-bayashi* (dance with *hayashi*): the major (usually concluding) section of a play, consisting of the long instrumental dance and the parts before and after it, given by the dancer, a small chorus, and the instrumentalists. Certain simple props (such as a sword or pole) may be used where necessary.

*Shimai* (dance excerpt): an important dance section performed with chorus only. *Shimai* illustrates the basic movement patterns (*kata*) that constitute the backbone of the actor's performance.

*I-bayashi* (seated *hayashi*): *mai-bayashi* without the dancer.

*Itchō* (one drum): an important passage chanted by one singer, accompanied by one drum. The main interest lies in the rhythmical composition. In *itchō* with the stick drum, elementary pieces may also be called *dokko* (solo drum).

*Muyō itchō* (one drum without chant): a solo drum performance.

*Itchō ikkan* (one drum, one flute): the flute added to drum and chant, usually to play a dance piece.

*Ikkān* (one flute): a flute solo.

*Renchō* (drums together): more than one drum, of the same type.

*Renkan* (flutes together): several flutes playing in unison.

In addition to playing for full Noh and for these abbreviated recital forms, the *hayashi* sometimes play for sections of chant or dance in Kyōgen plays or in special *ai-kyōgen*. This is called *kyōgen ashirai* and is the only type of playing we might consider accompaniment. The music for Kyōgen is similar in structure to Noh music but lighter and simpler in style. The *hayashi* players remain "at ease," seated on the stage instead of on stools and facing sideways (one another) rather than forward.

## MOVEMENT PATTERNS

### Components of the Dance

The movements of all the characters in Noh are choreographed, and as part of the play the *shite* usually does a number of structured dances, including short pieces, to vocal music as well as one long dance to instrumental music (the *mai* listed in the section on *hayashi-goto* in Chapter 12). All of the movements consist of units of movement, called *kata*, or patterns.

Just as the performance space is comprised of spatial units (*za*), the chant, of phrase units (twelve-syllable lines), and the music, of melodic and rhythmic units, so the dance is constructed in a modular system using units of movement. In Part III, I will discuss the way these systems are combined (together with the systems of masks, costumes, and properties) for the performance of Noh. In this chapter I will discuss the types of movement patterns that form the elements of the dance.

### THE CHOICE OF AN EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Human beings have three languages for expressing thoughts and feelings: vocal, facial, and gestural. The language of facial expressions is usually considered the most direct and detailed, but with the use of masks this language is foregone in Noh. The remaining languages on which the performers can rely for expression are the language of

bodily motions, useful for the conveyance of will, and of course the more sophisticated vocal language.

There are, however, problems with the use of vocal language as well. Even today the Japanese language is considered by many to be vague—that is, to be well suited to a delicate exchange of feelings but ill-suited to the direct expression of will. This view is voiced by Yūji Aida in his book *The Structure of the Japanese Consciousness*: “Language is an impediment to perfect mutual understanding. The world of pantomime is a region of true mutual understanding, and is this not innate in the Japanese?” Indeed, the great wealth and subtlety of Japanese for communication by suggestion—what we might even call a tradition—was consciously developed into an aesthetic in such poetic forms as haiku, where what is left unsaid is of great importance. However, when pushed into service for the direct expression of will, the language can easily become quite useless.

What are the implications of this for vocal expression in Noh, which as a form of drama requires the direct conveyance of will? Whether or not the founders of Noh considered the language vague and evocative, its actual use heightens these qualities in several ways. It is chanted, rather than clearly spoken, sometimes from behind a mask, sometimes almost in competition with the instrumental music and drummers’ calls. Most of the text of Noh is in verse, so words or sentences are abbreviated or lengthened in order to fit the seven-five syllable form. The style of the writing is quite indirect, even in passages expressing valor or brave intent. As we explained earlier, the text is rich in poetic embellishments, literary allusions, and religious and philosophical references. Thus it seems that vocal language in Noh is intended for lyrical evocation of the thoughts and emotions of some of the most profound human experiences, rather than for direct communication of intent or will.

This shows us the great importance of movement as an expressive language. Rather than comparing Noh to opera or drama or ballet, we must classify it as musical dance-drama, in which mime is a major element.

In our everyday lives we employ a wide vocabulary of gestures, from such concrete and direct movements as pointing and beckoning to such abstract, contrived gestures as the language of signs used by the deaf. Concrete and abstract movements are also used in Noh,

but they have been reduced to unit patterns and made symbolic. The rather paradoxical part of this is that patterned, symbolic movements communicate to the audience a much richer sense of the state of mind of the hero than would be possible with everyday gestures. All of the elements of Noh are important for expression, of course, but among them the movement patterns are central.

### STANCE AND CARRIAGE

Stance (*kamae*) and carriage (*hakobi*) form the basis for all of the movement patterns (*kata*). In the basic stance the arms describe a circle, the trunk is tilted forward somewhat, the knees are slightly bent, and the center of gravity is located in the lower part of the abdomen. The stance should be stable and natural. The actor moves about the stage in a gliding walk, maintaining the basic stance; he moves horizontally on one level, without bobbing up and down, and the movement proceeds from the hips. A steady concentration informs both the stillness of the seated and standing postures and the action resulting from the movement of the head, arms, torso, and legs. Actors acquire the ability to sit, stand, and move as prescribed through years of physical and mental training. The influence of Zen Buddhist thought is evident in this approach: each movement is reduced to its minimum, and therein lies the discovery of its perfection.

Many have observed, quite aptly, that the basis of Noh dance lies in stopping each movement just at the moment when the muscles are tensed. Certainly, the movement patterns concentrate dramatic power in moments of stillness and convey a sense of gravity. The principle of *jo-ha-kyū* applies to each pattern: the action begins slowly and gently, gradually increases in speed and tension, and finally reaches a climax, where it quickly absorbs inertia and comes to an abrupt halt. This progression is seen in the gliding walk, which thus moves from action to stillness. Although we stated above that the movement patterns are based on stance and carriage, we must conclude here that the times of action in Noh exist for the sake of the times of stillness, and that the stance and carriage are the bases not of movement but of the acquisition of the technique of nonmovement.

The French dramatist Jean-Louis Barrault has said, "The silence of



Noh is alive." These now famous words express excellently the vitality and dynamic eloquence of the moments in the movement patterns when the actor does not move at all.

If the essence of physical expression is in stillness then why do we often hear it said that Noh is an art of walking? Perhaps this comes from the fact that in Noh the form movement takes is abstracted as much as possible and then this the minimal movement symbolized as walking. The pure white *tabi* socks gliding along and reflected in the stage, moving now quickly, now slowly, give expression to the character and will of the actor. We might even say that one can experience an entire Noh play watching only the actors' feet. With gliding movements the *shite* and *waki* describe on the stage a pair of complementary and contrasting patterns. The *shite* weaves a web of fantasy in curves, and the *waki* draws reality in straight lines.

### THE EXPRESSIVE METHODS OF *Kata*

Movements in most forms of dance can be categorized as concrete—beautified versions of everyday gestures—and abstract—movements with no inherent meaning included for their graceful beauty. A slightly different system is used for categorizing the *kata* of Noh, however. As Noh developed from a kind of mimetic art, the patterns with concrete significance are far more numerous, yet many of those movements are used symbolically. Therefore, the Noh patterns can be classified as realistic (descriptive), symbolic, or abstract. Some examples of each type are as follows:

Realistic movement patterns:—to scoop salt water (*shio o kumu*): to use special buckets for scooping up seawater for salt (see Fig. 101); to jump into the bell (*kane ni tobikomu*): to actually jump into the giant bell property as it falls (Fig. 59); to slash with a halberd (*naginata de kiru*): to brandish a life-size halberd; to thrust with sword (*katana de sasu*): to brandish a life-size sword; and to read a book (*sōshi o yomu*): to hold a book or scroll in the hands.

Symbolic movement patterns—to droop (*shiori*): signifies weeping. One hand (*kata-shiori*) or both hands (*moro-shiori*) are raised slowly to the eyes and then lowered again (Fig. 60); to use the mask (*omote o tsukau*): to turn the face left and then right, indicating searching or

ments. The rich brocade costumes harmonize in a mysterious way with the bare, unpolished wooden stage. In the play, a character appears, something happens to the character, and through this happening many emotions are evoked in the audience.

This is perhaps how a Noh play would strike a relatively well-educated but uninformed observer of Noh. Indeed, this would be a genuine experience of Noh, a real encounter.

An understanding of the basic nature of Noh and the elements that comprise it can help the beginner to experience it. This, I hasten to add, is quite separate from the matter of taking lessons, as an amateur, in *utai* and *shimai*, the singing and dancing of Noh. I have grave doubts as to whether that approach can aid one's experience of Noh. It is all very well to pursue one's interests, but if this deteriorates into the practice of flipping through the script during a performance, or of paying attention only to one's own teacher or to a favorite performer, then one becomes only a spectator, not a true participant. Unfortunately, such people are rather common today, and this is a good example of the dangers of dilettantism. Zeami advised Noh actors to never forget the "beginner's mind" but his admonition applies not only to those training in the art.

And of course this principle is not limited to Noh. One need not take piano lessons in order to enjoy a Beethoven piano concerto. Even if one were a piano student, one would not attend a concert in order to focus only on the soloist's finger movements or to criticize the quality of the sound. Most people, with just a small amount of training in music, are able to go to a concert and feel the emotions of the composer as embodied in the music. Such an experience can be one of great rapture. It is also interesting to note that classical music enjoys far more performances and larger audiences than modern music. Surely this is because the classics, like Noh, have some intrinsic value that endures through the ages to strike a sympathetic chord in the heart of modern man.

## DOZING ENCOURAGED

One more requirement for a good experience of Noh is that one let oneself go when watching the play. Noh plays take place in a



59. A realistic movement pattern: leaping into the bell (Dōjō-ji).



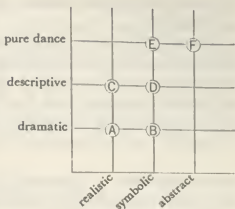
60. A symbolic movement pattern: weeping (Hanjo).

the blowing wind; to worship (*ogamu*): to raise the hands horizontally and bring the fingertips together; to view the moon (*tsuki no ōgi*): indicates the moon. The dancer brings the open fan (in the right hand) to the left shoulder and gazes up to the right.

Abstract movement patterns—left-right (*sayū*): a zig-zag pattern that marks the beginning or end of many dances. Both arms are brought forward, the right is lowered as the actor steps to the left, then the arms are reversed as he steps to the right. There are large and small forms of this pattern; forward point, open (*sashi-komi hiraki*): the right arm and right foot are extended forward, then both arms are opened out to the sides as the left foot, right foot, and the left foot again are drawn slowly backwards; extended fan (*kazashi ōgi*): the opened fan is held up at the right (Fig. 61); and stamps (*ashi-byoshi*): the actor sounds the stage with stamps. There are many variations, including single stamps, double stamps, series of four, six, or seven stamps, final stamps, pointing (walking) stamps, and so forth.



61. An abstract movement pattern: extended fan (Momiji-gari).



- A brandish halberd
- B weep
- C gaze at the moon
- D use the mask
- E falling from sky (in *Kantan*)
- F left-right pattern

62. Classification of dance patterns.

The realistic patterns generally correspond to the text; the symbolic patterns are typified by the weeping pattern; and the abstract patterns in the main are characteristic of the long instrumental dances.

Another way in which dance patterns are frequently categorized is into dramatic (narrative or lyrical) and purely dancelike (in which the figure of the dancer appeals to the aesthetic consciousness) forms. For Noh, we would add to these a third category, depictive. Neither sets nor effects (such as special lighting, sounds, wind, snow) are used in Noh, so the scene is set with descriptive passages in the text and certain movement patterns by the actors—gazing at the moon, pointing to blossoms floating on the water, dancing in the waves, enjoying a gentle breeze.

We might make a grid of these two systems of classification and plot a few of the dance patterns on it, as in Figure 62. Altogether there are about 250 movement patterns. However, most of the movement and dance of each play consists of about thirty basic patterns combined and repeated within a regular structure. The sparing use

of special decorative patterns is what gives each play its unique choreography.

Although Noh and classical ballet differ fundamentally in many important ways, it is interesting to note that they share a similar division of mimetic movement patterns: in classical ballet also there are realistic patterns, such as reaching out to one's beloved; symbolic patterns, such as tracing a circle in front of the face to signify "beautiful"; and abstract patterns, such as pirouettes and leaps.

**Dance and *Mai*** Throughout this book the *mai* of Noh is referred to as dance. However, in Japanese, *mai* is distinguished from *odori*, which also means dance. To make a rough distinction, *mai* tends to be concentric and contained; the knees are instinctively brought to the ground, bent, and the arms are curved; all is concentrated within and the movement is generally horizontal. *Odori*, on the other hand, tends to be directed outward and upward, with arms and legs extended, body and soul swelling and rising, the dance characterized by leaps and an upright stance. If Noh is an art of stillness and the gliding walk, the ballet could be thought of as an art of leaps and twirls, and this difference is embodied in the footwear: the *tabi* of Noh—flat-bottomed fitted socks of white cotton cloth—keep the dancer in constant contact with the ground; the toe shoes of ballet symbolize the yearning to rise, float, and break free. To perform Noh, in Japanese, is to dance it, and the verb used is *mau*, not *odoru*.

The white *tabi*, the starting point of the complex symbolism of Noh and the evidence that it is *mai*, are worn by all Noh actors in all roles in all scenes, as well as by the musicians, chorus members, and stage assistants.

Noh actors always move in the gliding walk. The upper body is tilted slightly forward, and many important movement patterns involve the head (with the mask) and the arms (with large sleeves, fan, and props); thus, much of the interest of the performance is created by the upper body. However, it is the walk, centered in the hips, that transports the character horizontally through space. The actor maintains the level, never bobbing up and down, even when moving quite rapidly. This is why the stage surface is so smooth. The actor uses moments of stillness and variations in the speed of the walk to give character to the role and express modulations in feeling.

Foot movements are an important part of the acting technique: a few halting steps backwards indicate disappointment, and two or three rapid steps forward show excitement. The viewer's attention often focuses on the feet, not because of spectacular leaps or spins but because of their subtle expressive power while in contact with the stage. The performer even sits with one leg tucked beneath the buttocks and the other leg forward, with the foot planted flat upon the stage.

## PATTERN, FORM, DANCE

**From Pattern to Form** Two Japanese words, *kata* and *katachi*, are closely related. *Kata* corresponds to pattern, model, or mold; it refers to set movements in the martial arts and to dance patterns in Noh. The word *katachi* means shape, form, or condition, as perceived by the senses. We can generally translate *kata* as pattern and *katachi* as shape or form, but the terms may be very close in meaning. According to etymological dictionaries the word *kata* derives from *kami* (god) and *ta* (paddy or hand). Thus *ka-ta* involves god, agriculture, and the hand of man, and indeed the basic movement patterns of Noh are related to agricultural activities and sacred rituals.

The *chi* of *katachi* apparently is an indication of mystical powers and often appears written with the character for soul or spirit. We see it in such words as *orochi* (a mysterious mountain deity), *tachi* (field deity), *mizuchi* (water deity), and *ikazuchi* (lightning deity). *Chi* is used here to indicate a kind of spirit or ghost developed from an elemental being.

Thus, *kata* originally meant some formalized body movement with a specific purpose. It is quite unrelated to costumes or outward appearance: ancient Noh texts illustrate *kata* with sketches of the actor clad only in a loincloth, and the standard training wear of the martial arts similarly serves to focus attention on the movements of the body.

In Noh, the same basic movement patterns are used for every role. Only by donning a mask and robes to perform the full play can the actor acquire the spirit (*chi*), creating on stage a being with a mind. The character takes shape (*katachi*), in other words, when the outer forms (*katachi*) indicating the inner soul (*chi*) are added to the standard patterns (*kata*). In many traditional arts there is a system

of standard patterns that express the heart when given a specific shape. In Noh, the actor-become-character uses *kata* to express the inner mind of the character in an outward form. The audience responds to the form and understands the mind.

Thus, *shimai* are not pieces of Noh plays but performances of a fundamentally different nature. While in Noh, patterns create the form (*katashi*) that expresses the state of mind of the main character, in *shimai*, the dancer demonstrates the *kata* (patterns) themselves, clad in the formal black kimono.

**From Pattern to Dance** Just as in ballet, a series of poses called an enchainement forms movements, and as letters form words that form sentences that form paragraphs that form a story, similarly, elemental movements form the *kata* (movement patterns) that form sections of stage action and formal dances that form Noh. The Noh story is told with a series of standardized segments (*shōdan*) of action and dance. Of course there are rules governing the way the patterns are combined. A performer would never, for instance, move directly from a seated position to a fast walk: a linking *kata* of rising and assuming the stance is always required. Any unnecessary movements, however, which only serve to cloud the expression, are eliminated. Zeami, in writing about composition, said that "the basic law of writing is to abbreviate language in expressing the meaning"; this is akin to saying that the most must be achieved through the use of the least. We can interpret this in a broad sense not merely as a principle for writing texts but also as an indication of the desirability of purity and simplicity of expression and functional clarity in all aspects of composition in Noh.

**Mai: Combinations of Patterns** The word *mai* is used in Noh with four different meanings: (1) in the widest sense, to perform, as in the verb *mau* (In Japanese one does not say, "He performed *Hagoromo*," but "He danced *Hagoromo*."); (2) in the narrowest sense, the patterns (*kata*) that are performed; (3) a structured series of patterns performed to vocal music (*utai*) or vocal and instrumental music (*utai-goto*); and (4) an independent, structured series of patterns performed to instrumental music (*hayashi-goto*), including the *mai*, a long instrumental dance that is the highlight of many plays.

The segments (*shōdan*) of patterns (*mai* as a noun, in the senses of 2, 3, and 4 above) can be classified by the way they are combined with music, as in Table 33.

Table 33. The Movement of Noh

Mai—	hayashi-goto (instrumental music)	—entrance ( <i>de-goto</i> ): <i>issei, shidai, deha</i> , etc.
		—withdrawals or exits ( <i>iri-goto</i> ): <i>okuri-bue, nakairi raijo</i> , etc.
		—linking movements ( <i>tsunagi-goto</i> ): walking, costume changes, or other transitional movements done to instrumental music
		—descriptive actions showing derangement, excitement, or conflict ( <i>hataraki-goto</i> ): <i>iroe, kakeri, mai-bataraki</i> , etc.
		—dances ( <i>mai-goto</i> ): the long structured dances that form the major part of the second half of many plays: <i>jo no mai, kami mai</i> , etc.
	utai-goto (vocal, or vocal- instrumental music)	—movements done to chant only, suited to the meaning of the text: <i>yobikake</i> (calling), etc.
		—dances done to segments ( <i>shōdan</i> ) of joint vocal-instrumental music, usually lyrical acting out of words: <i>age-uta, kuse, kiri</i> , etc.
	shijima-goto (silence)	—silent entrances, exits, or costume changes: <i>su no de, su no nakairi, su no monogi</i>

NOTES: The instrumental pieces (*hayashi-goto*) are described in Chapter 12. The combination of the segments will be discussed and illustrated in Part III.



**THE NOHMEN**  
**Not Mask but Face**

The language of facial expressions is the most primitive form of human communication, more basic than verbal and gestural language, which are based upon social and cultural conventions. With our faces we can express many things, from simple, immediately recognizable emotions like joy, sadness, anger, or amusement, to more complex feelings like hesitation, shame, or shyness. Nevertheless, the Noh drama renounces the use of the language of facial expressions by the employment of the mask. I would like to clarify that statement somewhat. It is not that facial expressions are completely abandoned in Noh, but that the true intent lies in the sophisticated dramatic technique of creating an unlimited number of expressions in the mind of the viewer by denying raw expressions with the use of a mask. Perhaps it could be said that by covering the at best unruly facial expressions of the actor, expressions likely to waver in the concentration and excitement of performance, the mask frees him to communicate a more accurate sense of the state of mind of the character through the movements of a highly trained body. In any case, the mask is used as a method of processing what is raw and elevating what is primitive in expression. Noh masks, especially, go far beyond the limits of makeup and are thought of as having some spiritual, mystical significance. In this they approach the real meaning of "mask" (which derives from the medieval Latin word for spectre): identifying the performer with the spirit of the character assumed.

# ALTERATION AND TRANSFORMATION: MAKEUP, MASK, AND FACE

**Makeup and Mask** There is an old proverb saying that "the eyes say as much as the mouth." This is a concise verbalization of the fact that the movements of the eyes, central to the facial expressions with which human beings communicate, rival the most eloquent spoken language in expressive power. We can readily demonstrate this by covering our eyes and then trying to express anger. Unless we add other physical gestures, it is impossible for a viewer to tell whether we are in a rage or in tears. And of course the eyes are essential for such uniquely human signs of emotional will as winking or glancing side-long. In determining another's intent, we must "listen" to the eyes.

In discussions of masks, comparisons are often made to *kumadori* (Fig. 63), the elaborate makeup used in Kabuki. Perhaps because it creates a similar impression, *kumadori* suggests a mask, but it is very different from a Noh mask. The obvious physical differences aside, *kumadori* is a raw expression symbolizing the character, who is given strong



63. The *kumadori* of Kabuki.

individuality by elaborate costumes, and the makeup makes the face a background against which acting with the eyes stands out even more. It might be called a mask with eyes. Actors are often heard to say that as they apply stage makeup gradually another self is born. This is a way of describing the process of changing oneself into another: the very act of making up gives rise to a suggestion, and the actor gradually becomes the character he is to play. The whiteface of pantomime is different from Kabuki makeup, of course, but it is also a way of changing the performer into a characterless expressive medium, thereby focusing all of the viewer's attention on the movements of the body.

These two face-creating techniques, Kabuki makeup and mime whiteface, are based on antithetical principles, but both, in that they use expression with the eyes, function quite differently from a mask, which eliminates all direct facial expressions. Both white-face and *kumadori* are makeup, the Japanese word for which, *kesho*, means adornment in order to change into—making oneself into someone else. The resulting image always includes the original self and the new self. The mask, however, by denying the existence of the eyes, symbolizes a complete transformation. There is a great difference between taking on the appearance of another while retaining the self, which is accomplished with makeup, and becoming a completely different being through transformation.

**Face and Mask** The word for the masks used in Noh is *nohmen*. *Men* means face or surface, and the character can also be pronounced *omote*, meaning outside. *Omote* is the word used by professional Noh actors. The usual word for mask in Japanese is *kamen*, or temporary face, and applies to the masks of ancient Greek drama, for example, as well as to the masks of Bugaku and Gigaku (Fig. 64), types of court dance brought to Japan from the Chinese continent in the seventh century. Although both *nohmen* and *kamen* differ from makeup in that they serve as tools for transformation, and although in translation we refer to both as masks, the linguistic distinction in Japanese reflects an important conceptual difference.

In Japanese, the verb *kaburu* is used with *kamen*, meaning to put on a mask. *Kaburu* means to cover the head (for example, with a hat,



64. A Gigaku mask.

scarf, or even water). In Noh, however, one affixes (*tsukeru* or *kakeru*) the *omote* (face, surface). Masks serve to create an intensified image of a role in a way that goes beyond the depiction of character through costumes and movements. Thus, masks are meant to be very symbolic, and they are usually made somewhat larger than life, with exaggerated features or expressions. The masks used in ancient Greek drama were of particularly great size in order to act as sounding boards, causing the actor's words to resound through the giant performance space. In early religious rites it was believed that the mask was the god itself, so to cover oneself with the mask was to change oneself into the form of the god. When this property of the mask to effect a transformation of appearance was incorporated into drama, what we call masked drama was created. This conception of the mask was also employed in Noh in the very beginning, but, as Noh was quickly refined into a dramatic art, the transformation of consciousness came

dimension of fantasy that transcends the normal bounds of time and space, so one cannot become absorbed in a Noh play if one is attempting to make what is happening conform to logic and common sense. By extinguishing momentarily the bright flame of realistic consciousness and darkening the mind, one will enable the deeper consciousness to surface. This is very close to a state of sleep, but the state of being half awake and half asleep, this feeling of being halfway between dreaming and reality is the territory of time and space where the nonrealistic consciousness of Noh dwells. This is where the participant can attune himself to the Noh consciousness, and past experiences sleeping in the depths of one's psyche will reverberate sympathetically with emotions expressed in the play. Many people who go to see Noh for the first time often become sleepy because they slip into this state unawares, transported by the never-before-experienced magical atmosphere of the special sounds and the symbolic nature of the movements on stage. The result is a kind of separation from reality. Modern people, especially, constantly worried and tense, should welcome this splendid, undisturbed repose, however fleeting.

Noh is not simply a rusted curiosity, nor is it necessarily a recondite, difficult art. It leads to fresh discoveries in the heart of each person it touches. Rather than try to argue this as a theoretical point, however, I urge you to go and experience the Noh theater for yourself. The time you spend will be returned in intangible benefits worth several times the original investment, and your life will surely be enriched.



65. A ko-omote (young woman mask).

to be considered more important than the transformation of appearance. Thus, we would call the Noh of today a drama that uses masks, which is quite different from a masked drama.

This conception of the role of the mask explains why *nohmen* are generally made rather small. The female masks, especially (Fig. 65), which must incorporate the highest degree of the mystery and evocation of *yūgen*, are made considerably smaller than the actual human face. This reflects not only the distaste in Noh for the falsity of large masks with exaggerated features, but also the different conception of the masks' purpose as described above. The word *omote*, used instead of *nohmen* in the Noh world, means outside, surface, or face, and the *omote* is treated much like the face of a statue, which is usually called *hyōmen*. The character for *hyō* can also be pronounced *omote*. Thus, the use of the words *omote* (face) and *tsukeru* (affix) in Japanese show that the Noh mask is thought of rather as part of the actor's

body, and this means that when this Noh face is combined with the robes they act together to symbolize the character being played.

### EXPRESSION THROUGH A DOUBLE NEGATIVE

There is an expression describing a face as being "like a Noh mask," which is used particularly to describe the impassive face of a beautiful woman. Although there are many kinds of Noh masks, this expression suggests that the woman masks are symbolic, with their ineffable beauty. However, Japanese psychiatrists use the term "Noh-mask expression" to describe a pathological lack of facial expressions in a patient. There are even some dramatists who explain the calm, neutral Noh face as "the face of a human being who, under the feudal system, repressed all emotions, never revealed human feelings on the outside, and strove to live on as ordered." This is a sad misunderstanding.

Although at first glance the Noh mask may seem to have a fixed expression, it is certainly not expressionless. On the contrary, when the mask is moved and the light changes, or when it is seen from a different angle, it can mystically take on an infinite variety of expressions. It has a profound quality that leads to a comparison with the puzzling expression of the Mona Lisa, or the intimate yet mystical "archaic smile" of classical Greek sculpture. The basic quality of the Noh mask's expression should be interpreted not as a passive "neutral" but rather as an active "infinite."

The actor's techniques for using the Noh mask are clear and simple. He can brighten the mask (*omote o terasu*) by tilting it slightly upwards, which usually expresses joy. He can cloud over the mask (*omote o kumorasu*) by tilting it down and putting it into shadow, which expresses sadness. He can turn the mask from side to side, either quickly (to cut the mask, *omoto o kiru*), showing strong emotions like anger, or slowly and perhaps repeatedly (to use the mask, *omote o tsukau*) for a number of deep meanings. There are other mask movement patterns, but all are related to these basic three. The fixed expression and sparing movement of the Noh mask are not an indication that acting with the face is considered trivial in Noh. Rather, these qualities create

infinite possibilities for a certain high-level, strict expression. This might be called expression through a double negative.

By first denying all raw facial expressions in the act of donning the mask and then denying the existence of the mask, the performer constantly seeks a higher degree of sensitivity in the presentation of an infinite number of sentiments.

The double denial allows the expression only of joy, anger, or sorrow. On the basis of the denial of the self (discussed in Chapter 3, "Detached Viewing") movements are highly symbolic and suggest much. The combination of this simplicity of expression with the mask and economy of movement of the body, however, calls up a wealth of images deep within the heart and mind of the viewer and makes the internal drama possible. It can be concluded that the goal of expression in Noh is for the actor to bring forth the sentiments of the hero and then together with the audience to sublimate them into the Noh space.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some plays in which masks are not used, called *hitamen-mono* (maskless pieces). The hero in these plays is always a male character who actually existed, such as the warrior monk in *Ataka*, or the loyal samurai in *Hachi no Ki*. In such plays the idea is to fix a still expression like a mask on the "bare wood" of the actor's face—the *hitamen* is a mask that is not a mask. The face is strictly required to function as a mask, so of course makeup is never used and the facial muscles must not be used to make expressions. In fact, in the most extreme terms, the actor should not even allow the eyelids to blink.

## TYPES OF NOH MASKS

Noh masks (Figs. 66–82) are objects of great beauty, treasured by Noh families and institutions, and some of the masks used today date back several centuries. There are frequent exhibitions of Noh masks in museums and galleries both in Japan and overseas. The carving and finishing of masks is a craft requiring great skill and many years of training, and while there are many enthusiastic students of this art today, there are only a few master sculptors who can produce masks suitable for performance. However, Noh masks are



not mere objects and cannot be considered finished works of art until they are donned by the actor and used on stage amidst the melody of the chant and the rhythm of the instrumental music, just one of the elements in the organic whole of Noh. The actor's stable posture in moments of stillness and steady bearing in the gliding walk make the effect of raising, lowering, or turning the mask particularly striking. Only when the mask, especially the woman mask, is given life and breath in performance does it exhibit its astonishingly expressive wealth and reveal to us its true beauty.

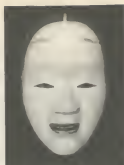
Symbolism and expression by suggestion characterize many aspects of Noh, and as we might expect there is not a specific mask for every play. The ideal is for the performer to create a unique heart and mind for the character while using one of a number of standardized masks. The name of the type of mask to be used in a given play is specified in the chant book, although in practice there is considerable variation, depending on the performer's interpretation of the role as well on the as range of masks available to him. However, there are a few types of masks, such as *Yoroboshi*, *Kagekiyo*, *Shunkan*, and *Yamamba*, that are used only in the plays of the same name.

There were three original types of masks, from which all others are believed to have been derived: masks of gods or demons, old man masks, and woman masks. The god or demon masks are the oldest type, developed through faith in the days of the strongest ties to religious observances. The old man masks also took shape rather early, and they reflect the general notion in ancient times that the elderly person is closest to gods and spirits. The woman masks increased rapidly in number with the expansion of the repertory of plays in the days of Zeami. When the ideal of *yūgen* came to dominate aesthetic values in Noh, the young woman mask became representative of the Noh mask.

For your reference, I have compiled a chart (Table 34) showing the names of the major types of masks, with brief descriptions of their features and the titles of plays in which they are principally used. The word *mae-jite* indicates that the mask is worn by the *shite* in the first act of a play, and *nochi-jite*, by the *shite* in the second. We have included wherever possible literal translations of the names of the masks, although the meanings are not always clear and the names are mostly unfamiliar to modern Japanese.



66. *Ko-omote*



67. *Deigan*



68. *Hashihime*



70. *Fukai*

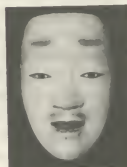


71. *Uba*

MALE MASKS



73. *Dōji*



74. *Chūjō*



75. *Heida*

OLD MAN MASKS



77. *Hakushiki-jō*



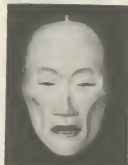
78. *Asakura-jō*



79. *Ō-aku-jō*



69. Hannya



72. Yase-onna



76. Yase-otoko

The simplest of the woman masks is the *Ko-omote*, the "small face" of a young woman, which illustrates the classical ideal of beauty. The golden-eyed *Deigan* indicates female emotions of persistent devotion, which engender an inner battle with jealousy. This is developed in the *Hashihime* and finally explodes in a violent rage in the *Hannya*.

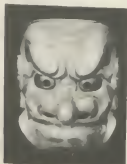
The proportions of the face of the Venus de Milo accord with the golden mean. That is, the ratio of height to width is 1:1.618, and the face is divided into three equal parts: from the forehead to the upper edge of eye sockets, from there to the tip of the nose, and from there to the tip of the chin. It happens that these ancient Greek standards of beauty also apply to the *Ko-omote* mask. Ancient Japanese balanced the greater cheek area of the the shallower Oriental face by placing the eyebrows high on the forehead.

Although the *Okina* mask *Hakushiki-jō* is shown with the Old man masks, the *Okina* masks are constructed and used differently than all other Noh masks.

The extreme expression of the *Ō-aku-jō* makes it seem somewhere between an old man and a contorted mask.

The *Yase-otoko* (thin man) indicates the state of a man in death. If you compare it with the *Yase-onna* mask, the differences should be apparent.

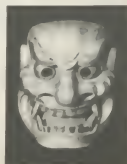
#### CONTORTED MASKS



80. Ō-beshimi



81. Ō-tobide



82. Shishi-guchi

Table 34. Noh Masks

## MASKS USED IN OKINA

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Hakushiki-jō</i> (old man, white)	<i>Okina</i> only	All of the masks in this category are used only in <i>Okina</i> . They are unique in being constructed in two pieces that are divided at the mouth line and joined with rope. This is called <i>kiri-ago</i> (cut-jaw). Some of the <i>Okina</i> masks also have special pompomlike eyebrows. All have expressions of happiness and contentment.
<i>Nikushiki-jō</i> (old man, full-faced)	"	
<i>Chichi no jō</i> (old man, father)	special version of <i>Okina</i> only	
<i>Emmei Kaja</i> (young man, longlife)	"	
<i>Kokushiki-jō</i> (old man, black)	<i>Sambaō</i> only	

## JŌ MASKS (OLD MAN)

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Characteristics
<i>Kō-jō</i> (small <i>jō</i> )	<i>Takasago</i> , <i>Naniwa</i> , etc. <i>mae-jite</i>	A god incarnated as old man. Also called <i>Kōushi-jō</i> , after the creator.
<i>Asakura-jō</i> ( <i>jō</i> of <i>Asakura</i> )	<i>Yorimasa</i> , <i>Yashima</i> , etc. <i>mae-jite</i>	Face of an old man of the lower class. Dedicated by creator Fukurai to the house of <i>Asakura</i> , which he served.
<i>Sankō-jō</i> ( <i>jō</i> of <i>Sankō</i> )	"	Face of an old man of the lower class. Created by the monk <i>Sankō</i> .
<i>Warai-jō</i> (laughing <i>jō</i> )	<i>Toru</i> , <i>Akogi</i> , etc. <i>mae-jite</i>	Face of reincarnated aristocrat or supernatural being.
<i>Akobu-jō</i>	<i>Sanshō</i> , <i>Tōsen</i> , etc.	Face of a gentle old man.
<i>Mai-jō</i> (dancing <i>jō</i> )	<i>Yugyō Yanagi</i> , <i>Saigyō-zakura</i> , etc.	Face of a gentle old man, used in plays with a dance.
<i>Shiwa-jō</i> (wrinkled <i>jō</i> )	"	Dancing <i>jō</i> mask with particularly deep wrinkles.
<i>Ishio-jō</i> ( <i>jō</i> of <i>Ishio</i> )	"	Dancing <i>jō</i> mask created by Fukurai <i>Ishio Byōe</i> .

## AKUJŌ MASKS (MALEVOLENT OLD MAN)

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Ō-akujō</i> (large <i>akujō</i> )	<i>Tama no I</i> , etc.	Strong, fearsome face of old man.
<i>Ko-akujō</i> (small <i>akujō</i> )	<i>Koi no Omoni</i> , etc.	Face showing old man's wrath.
<i>Hanakobu-akujō</i> (swollen-nose <i>akujō</i> )	<i>Shirahige</i> , etc.	<i>Akujō</i> mask with a swollen nose.
<i>Myōga-akujō</i> (bulb-shaped <i>akujō</i> )	<i>Dōmyō-ji</i> , etc.	Earless <i>akujō</i> with eyes shaped like the bulb of <i>myōga</i> plant, a variety of ginger.
<i>Beshimi-akujō</i> (frown <i>akujō</i> )	<i>Himuro</i> , etc.	<i>Akujō</i> with mouth clamped shut, like the <i>Beshimi</i> mask.

## MASKS WITH CONTORTED FEATURES

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Ō-beshimi</i> (great frown)	<i>Kurama Tengu</i> , <i>Dai-e</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of the mythical <i>tengu</i> . <i>Beshimi</i> means mouth clamped firmly shut.
<i>Ko-beshimi</i> (small frown)	<i>Nomori</i> , <i>Ukai</i> , etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a demon god.
<i>Saru-beshimi</i> (monkey frown)	<i>Nue</i> , etc.	Face of an evil spirit resembling a monkey.
<i>Ō-tobide</i> (great bulge)	<i>Arashiyama</i> , <i>Kuzu</i> , etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a god in heaven, with bulging eyes.
<i>Ko-tobide</i> (small bulge)	<i>Kokaji</i> , <i>Sesshōseki</i> , etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a god who runs about on earth.
<i>Saru-tobide</i> (monkey bulge)	<i>Nue</i> , etc.	Monkeylike face, with bulging eyes, of a creature who plots mischief.
<i>Shōjō</i>	<i>Shōjō</i> , <i>Taihei Shōjō</i> , etc.	Cheerful, flushed face of <i>Shōjō</i> , the saké-loving elf.
<i>Kumasaka</i>	<i>Kumasaka</i> only	Face of <i>Kumasaka Chōhan</i> , master thief of the late Heian period.
<i>Kurohige</i> (black beard)	<i>Chikubushima</i> , <i>Kasuga</i> <i>Ryujin</i> , etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a dragon god-king.
<i>Ikkaku Sennin</i> (one-horned hermit)	<i>Ikkaku Sennin</i> only	Face of a malevolent Taoist hermit who battles dragon gods.

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Shikami</i> (scowl)	<i>Ōeyama, Momiji-gari,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Fierce scowling face, showing extreme agitation, used for demonic spirits.
<i>Shishi-guchi</i> ( <i>shishi</i> mouth)	<i>Shakkyō</i> only	Face of the mythical lion-dog, barking.

## MASKS OF GODS AND BUDDHAS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Fudō</i>	<i>Chobuku Sōga,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of Fudō Myō-ō, or Acala, a fierce Buddhist deity.
<i>Shintai</i> (god-body)	<i>Takasago, Yōrō,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a young god.
<i>Tenjin</i> (heavenly god)	<i>Shari, Kinsatsu,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a god in heaven, in a wrathful state.

## YOUNG MAN MASKS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Dōji</i> (young boy)	<i>Tamura, Shakkyō</i> etc. <i>mae-jite</i>	God or spirit who has taken the form of a normal young boy.
<i>Jidō</i> (child)	<i>Kiku-jidō, Makura-jidō,</i> etc.	The mystical child-god Jidō.
<i>Jūroku</i> (sixteen)	<i>Tsunemasa, Atsumori,</i> etc.	Face of warrior Taira no Atsumori, who perished in battle at age sixteen.
<i>Imawaka</i> (now young)	<i>Kiyotsune, Tadanori,</i> etc.	Gentle, sensitive face of a prince or cultured young nobleman, often one who died in battle.
<i>Chūjō</i> (lieutenant)	"	Same as above.
<i>Kantan Otoko</i> (Kantan man)	<i>Kantan, Takasago,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Created for the play <i>Kantan</i> , came to be used for face of bright young god.
<i>Semimaru</i>	<i>Semimaru</i> only	Face of the blind Prince Semimaru.
<i>Kasshiki</i> (acolyte)	<i>Jinen Kōji, Kagetsu,</i> etc.	Face of a handsome young man who serves at a temple or noble house.
<i>Yoroboshi</i> (faltering monk)	<i>Yoroboshi</i> only	Face of young boy wrongfully banished who has gone blind with grief. The name means a monk ( <i>hoshi</i> ) who walks with faltering ( <i>yoro</i> ) steps.

## MIDDLE-AGE MAN MASKS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Heida</i> (equalizing greatness)	<i>Tamura, Yashima</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a warrior in his prime, one who banishes an evil spirit.
<i>Ayakashi</i> (mysterious apparition)	<i>Funa Benkei, Matsu-mushi,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Vengful male face, used for mysterious male ghosts.
<i>Taka</i> (hawk)	"	Face of a wrathful man with fierce features.
<i>Mika-zuki</i> (crescent moon)	"	Face of a wrathful warrior. Named for carver's crescent marking on back.

## OLD MAN MASKS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Yase-ototo</i> (thin man)	<i>Fujito, Kayoi Komachi,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of man in death.
<i>Kagekiyo</i>	<i>Kagekiyo</i> only.	Face of Kagekiyo, an old blind priest.
<i>Yorimasa</i>	<i>Yorimasa</i> only.	Face of Minamoto no Yorimasa.
<i>Shunkan</i>	<i>Shunkan</i> only.	Face of Priest Shunkan.

## YOUNG WOMAN MASKS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Ko-omote</i> (small face)	<i>Tōboku, Izutsu,</i> many other plays	Face of a gentle young beauty.
<i>Waka-onna</i> (young woman)	<i>Nonomiya, Matsukaze,</i> etc.	Face of an elegant beauty.
<i>Zō-onna</i> (Zō woman)	<i>Yuya, Eguchi,</i> etc.	Woman mask created by Zōami.
<i>Ōmi-onna</i> (Ōmi woman)	<i>Dōjō-ji, Ama,</i> etc. <i>mae-jite</i>	Face of young woman showing persistent devotion and emotions of a mature woman. Used by Ōmi Sarugaku troupe.

## **Part One**

# **PRINCIPLES AND PERSPECTIVES**



## MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN MASKS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Fukai</i> (deep)	<i>Mii-dera, Sumida-gawa,</i> etc.	Face of a woman who has aged somewhat.
<i>Shakumi</i> (concave)	"	Same as above. The appearance of the face, slightly concave, is sadder.

## OLD WOMAN MASKS

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Uba</i> (granny)	<i>Obasute, Seki-dera</i> <i>Komachi, etc.</i>	Face of old woman in deranged state.
<i>Rōjo</i> (old woman)	<i>Sotoba Komachi, Ōmu</i> <i>Komachi, and Seki-dera Komachi,</i>	Face of the beautiful court poet Ono no Komachi as an old woman.
<i>Komachi</i>	"	Same as above.
<i>Higaki Onna</i> ( <i>Higaki</i> woman)	<i>Higaki</i> only	Face of the ghost of an old woman.

MASKS OF INSANE OR JEALOUS CHARACTERS,  
VENGEFUL GHOSTS, AND DEMONESES

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Masugami</i> (long hair)	<i>Ukifune, Tamakazura,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of aristocratic woman in state of derangement.
<i>Deigan</i> (mud eyes)	<i>Teika, Kinuta, etc.</i> <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of woman persistently devoted to loved one. Also said to be expression of an enlightened woman or a Bodhisattva. Whites of eyes painted with a solution of mud and gold powder.
<i>Hashihime</i> (bridge princess)	<i>Hashihime, Kanawa,</i> etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a demon in a jealous rage.
<i>Hannya</i> (female demon)	<i>Aoi no Ue, Dōjō-ji, etc.</i> <i>nochi-jite</i>	Same as above. Has horns.

Name of Mask	Principle Use	Facial Characteristics
<i>Ja</i> (serpent)	<i>Dōjō-ji</i> , special version	Face with the gaping mouth of a serpent.
<i>Ryō no onna</i> (ghost woman)	<i>Teika</i> , <i>Kinuta</i> , etc. <i>nochi-jite</i>	Face of a woman in death.
<i>Yase-onna</i> (thin woman)	"	Same as above.
<i>Yamamba/ Yamauba</i>	<i>Yamamba</i> only	Face of a mystical old spirit-woman of the mountains.

NOTES: Female characters are transformed into demons in three degrees, as shown by the types of masks: *nama-nari*, the somewhat demonic face of a soul filled with malice (*Hashihime*); *chū-nari*, the demonic face of a character fighting an inner battle with rage (*Hannya*); and *hon-nari*, the most demonic face, a character completely transformed into a beast; (*Ja*).

There are three colors of the second of these, *Hannya*: white—elegant, used in *Aoi no Ue* red—medium, used in *Dōjō-ji*; and black—coarse, used in *Kuro-zuka*.

## THE NOH COSTUMES

### Symbols of Revelation

The costumes used in Noh are called robes, or *shōzoku*. While the mask symbolizes the heart and mind of a character, the robes give it clear definition on stage. To complete the outfit of the performer, wigs, hats, other personal accessories affixed to the actor's body, the fan, and other properties are used in addition to the mask and robes.

The lush silk Noh robes contrast strikingly with the bare wooden stage, creating a kind of harmony of incongruity. Yet another example of the symbolism in Noh is seen in the skillful use of the natural tendency of the human eye to see bright things as large and dark things as small: the *waki* is usually clad in matte fabrics of dark colors, showing that he is a shadow character, while the *shite* is robed in richly colorful, lustrous costumes, representing revelation. Because of their outstanding texture, color, and form, Noh robes are often appreciated simply for their weave, embroidery, and patterns, and indeed they are of great historical and cultural interest. Like masks, however, they come to life only on the stage, when they are made three-dimensional and moved about, for their true beauty lies in the form they make moving through space and the flow of their distinctive straight-line cut.

Costuming, like other elements of Noh, is a system in which components are combined in accordance with certain rules. In this chapter, the different types of robes and the way they are put on

will be described. In Part III, I will explain how this works as a system, interconnected with other systems.

## DONNING THE ROBES

The actor first puts on a plain white cotton cloth undershirt, white cotton tights, and white *tabi*, then a knee-length padded silk robe called a *dōgi* and a small pillow to round out the abdomen. A single or double collar, *eri*, of appropriate color is folded into the collar of the *dōgi*. This is the basic stage underwear, giving the actor the necessary shape and providing protection (from sweat and body oils) for the robes. Over this comes the under robe, called *kitsuke*, which corresponds to underwear in traditional dressing. Sometimes, depending on the role, the actor wears the long, stiff divided skirt called *hakama*, which is put on over the *kitsuke*. Finally the actor dons an outer robe (*uwagi*), which either hangs loose or is tied in place with a hip band (*koshi-obi*). A wig or other headgear is placed on the actor's head and personal accessories as necessary are affixed. The fan is tucked into the front of the kimono. Then the actor moves from the dressing room to the mirror room, where he studies his figure in the mirror and dons the mask. With this the outfitting is complete. He takes the fan or other prop in his hand and is ready to make his entrance.

Although we say the actor dons the robes, in fact he is dressed by fellow actors. In the past there were professional dressers, but today the *shite*, *kokata*, and *tsure* are dressed by fellow *shite-kata*, the *waki*, by *waki-kata*, and the *ai*, by *kyōgen-kata*. Actors who are particularly adept at dressing other actors or assembling properties are colloquially called *gakuya no meijin*, or "dressing room maestros."

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMAN COSTUMES

Just as the woman masks are considered representative of Noh masks, so the costumes for woman characters are considered central. The most basic female costume consists of an inner robe of *surihaku* or



83. Kinagashi (Izutsu).



84. Nugi-sage (Hana-gatami).



85. Tsubo-ori koshimaki (Dōjō-ji).

*nuihaku* (satin-weave silk with gold- or silver-foil appliqué or gold-thread embroidery) and an outer robe of *karaori* (a stiff, small-sleeved silk robe of colorful brocade). These are combined in one of four ways:

*kinagashi* (worn flowing) This is the usual way of wearing kimono, the outer robe over the under robe hanging from the shoulders to the ground and tied at the waist. It is the most common costume for woman characters. (See Fig. 83)

*nugi-sage* (removed and draped) The right sleeve of the outer robe is slipped off and draped down the back. This indicates active movement and often symbolizes that the woman is mad. (See Fig. 84)

*tsubo-ori koshimaki* (pot fold, waist draped) The *nuihaku* under robe is tied at the waist and the top half allowed to drape down, then the *karaori* outer robe is hiked up around the hips over the draping under robe. When a character wears only an under robe and no *karaori* outer robe, the costuming is called *mogidō* and indicates that the character is half-dressed. (See Figs. 85, 86)

*tsubo-ori ōkuchi* (pot fold over *ōkuchi*) The outer robe is hiked up



86. Mogidō  
(Ama).



87. Tsubo-ori ōkuchi  
(Yōkihi).



88. Chōken, over kinagashi  
(Hyakuman).

and tucked in over particularly stiff *hakama* called *ōkuchi*. This indicates a court lady. (See Fig. 87)

These four basic ways of dressing are for young women, and the front of the outer kimono worn in the flowing style is open fairly wide. For older woman characters, the fronts are lapped closely over one another, in the style called *uba-zuke*. This is used, for example, for the old women in *Fujito* and *Takasago*. In plays where the female character dances, the actor often wears loose, diaphanous outer robes over the *surihaku*, such as the *chōken* (Fig. 88) or *mai-ginu* (dancing cloaks).

The basic costume for male characters consists of an under robe of *atsuita* (brocade with geometric designs) or *noshime* (everyday kimono with broad stripes). The outer robe may be *suō*, *kari-ginu*, *happi*, *sobatsugi*, *mizu-goromo*, *nōshi*, or *hitatare*, depending on the role and the actor's interpretation of it. The under and outer kimono are sometimes combined with such *hakama* as *ōkuchi*, *hangire*, *naga-bakama*, and *sashinuki*. (The costumes of Noh are described in detail on pages 246-50).



89. The mae-jite of Genjō.



90. The nochi-jite of Genjō.

### TYPICAL COSTUMES: TWO EXAMPLES

I would now like to look at the costumes used for the *shite* in two different plays. (Descriptions of the costumes follow in the next section.)

**Genjō** The *mae-jite* (Fig. 89) is an old man (*jō*) of humble stature who lives by the sea (he is actually an incarnation of a former emperor). He wears the old-man wig (*jō-gami*), a collar of pale green, an under robe of *noshime* in a plain or highlighted small-check pattern. The outer robe is a lightweight *mizu-goromo* of raw silk. He wears a damask hip band and over it a straw apron.

The *nochi-jite* (Fig. 90) is the ghost of Emperor Murakami. He wears no wig but a royal hat (*ui-kammuri*) held in place with a head band of gold damask (worn under the mask). The collars are white and red, and the under robe is a *nuihaku* with red in it, worn over the stiff *ōkuchi*. *Sashinuki*, soft, loose trousers gathered at the ankles, are sometimes worn over the *ōkuchi*. The outer robe is an unlined hunting robe (*kari-ginu*) or *nōshi*. It is tied with a hip band with a crest embroidered on the ends.



91. The mae-jite of Funa Benkei.



92. The nochi-jite of Funa Benkei.

**Funa Benkei** In this play the *shite* in the first act is a young dancing girl and in the second act a completely different character, the angry ghost of the warrior Taira no Tomomori.

The dancing courtesan Shizuka Gozen (Fig. 91) wears a black wig and over it a wig band with gold foil and red coloring. The two collars are red and white or both white. The under robe is *nuihaku*, the outer *karaori* robe worn in the flowing (*kinagashi*) style. During the play she puts on a hat, called a Shizuka *eboshi*, to dance.

The *nochi-jite* (Fig. 92) wears a black headpiece with a metal accessory symbolizing a helmet attached and a headband of gold damask weave on a black ground. The two collars are of white and medium blue. The under robe is *atsuita* with red, or sometimes *karaori* without red. He wears stiff, brilliantly patterned *hakama* called *hangire*. The outer robe is the wide-sleeved *happi* or the sleeveless *sobatsugi*. Over this is tied a crested hip band.

These are the basic costumes for four major types of roles: the humble old man, the royal figure, the young woman, and the ghost of a warrior. There are, of course, many variations on these four principal themes.



## ELEMENTS OF THE COSTUMES

**Outer Robes**

*karaori* (Chinese weave): A small-sleeved (*kosode*) robe of lush brocade, woven in a Chinese style, or one of comparable intricacy. The brilliant *karaori* is representative of Noh costumes. Robes whose colors include red (called *iro-iri*) are used for young woman characters, and those without red (*iro-nashi*), for middle-aged or older characters.

*nuihaku* (embroidery, foil): A small-sleeved robe with gold- or silver-foil appliqué and embroidery on a satin-weave base. The effect of these shimmering, gorgeous robes is second only to the beauty of the *karaori*. The *nuihaku* is often worn in the *koshimaki* style, draped from the waist. It is used for both male and female roles.

*atsuita* (thick board): A small-sleeved robe of thick material similar to the *karaori* but with geometrical patterns. It can be used as an under or outer robe, principally for male roles.

*chōken* (long silk): A diaphanous broad-sleeved unlined cloak used for dancing. The ground of white, purple, scarlet, pale green, or pale blue may have a gold-thread pattern woven in. The sides of the bodice are not seamed, and on each side of the front is a long vermilion braid, tied in a bow on the chest. The *chōken* is used mostly for female characters, but sometimes is worn instead of the *happi* by young noblemen in warrior Noh. It may or may not have red in it.

*mai-ginu* (dancing robe): This is nearly the same as the *chōken*, but the front and back of the bodice are seamed at the sides and there is no tie cord.

*kari-ginu* (hunting robe): A loose cloak with a round collar and threaded cuffs. The unlined gauze *kari-ginu*, similar to the *chōken*, is worn by gods and court nobles. The lined *kari-ginu* is of gold brocade with patterns and is used for gods, *tengu*, demons, and other spirits.

*nōshi* (direct robe): Similar to the unlined hunting robe, it is worn by the emperor and nobility.

*happi* (receiving the law): A broad-sleeved robe of the same fabric as the *kari-ginu* hunting cloak. Unlined, it is used for nobles of the Taira clan, with the right sleeve slipped off the shoulder, rolled up, and inserted vertically into the back (*katanugi*). Lined, it is used for

Minamoto warriors or for demons. In both cases, the warriors beseech a traveling monk to recite the sutras, that they might be enlightened.

*sobatsugi* (follow next): A sleeveless *happi*. Used for lowly warriors, attendants, or Chinese characters.

*suō* (plain cover): The everyday dress of an ordinary person in medieval Japan. The wide-sleeved hemp robe with stencil-dyed designs may be worn with matching trousers or with *ōkuchi*.

*hitatare* (direct cover): Wide-sleeved common dress of a warrior consisting of a matching robe and trousers like the *suō*. *Ōkuchi* are sometimes worn beneath the trousers to given them shape, and sometimes the robe is worn without the trousers, with *ōkuchi* (called *kake-hitatare*). Made of stiff linen or silk, it is always lined.

*mizu-goromo* (water robe): A short, wide-sleeved cloak of very thin silk. It is categorized by weave and pattern as plain weave, striped, and gauze weave. Possible colors are white, brown, and purple. A brown, plain-weave *mizu-goromo* is frequently worn by the *waki* as a traveling priest, the gauze weave, by female characters, and the striped, by male characters.

### Under Robes

*surihaku* (foil appliqué): A small-sleeved robe of white satin with appliqué of gold or silver foil. Represents a woman's skin. Gold foil on fabric with red indicates a young woman, silver foil without red indicates a middle-aged or older woman. For special uses there are also robes with a stylized fish-scale pattern in gold or silver.

*noshime* (striped): The usual under robe for male characters, a small-sleeved robe in a plain, striped, or checked fabric. Widely used in Noh for aged characters or common villagers or soldiers.

*nuihaku*: Described above, these are also used as under robes.

### Trousers (*Hakama*)

*ōkuchi* (large mouth): Plain-colored *hakama* with back of stiff weave and softer pleated front, having very large openings at the ankle. They are usually white, but may also be red, purple, light green, brown, or other colors, or decorated with a repeating crest pattern. Used for a variety of both male and female roles.



*hangire/hangiri* (half-cut): Of the same shape as *ōkuchi* but of a gorgeous fabric of gold brocade with large design patterns. Used for gods, demons, *tengu*, or warriors.

*naga-bakama* (long hakama): *Hakama* with very long, trailing pant-legs, upon which the performer treads. Usually scarlet.

*sashinuki* (laced): Soft, baggy pantaloons laced at the cuffs and tied above the ankle, allowing the fabric to balloon and fall softly to ground level. They are sometimes worn over *ōkuchi* to give them shape, with *nōshi* or *hitatare*. They indicate a person of high rank.

### Headgear (Fig. 93)

*kashira* (head): Large, manelike headpieces of red, white, or black, worn by supernatural beings, deities, demons, or ghosts.

*katsura* (wig): Types of wigs used include the woman's wig (*katsura*) usually tied in back, the long wig (*naga-katsura*), the long switch (*naga-kamoji*), the acolyte wig (*kasshiki-katsura*), dissheveled tresses (*midare-bin*), the old woman's wig (*uba-katsura*), and the old man's hair (*jō-gami*). The long hair of the *katsura*, attached to a small square of cloth, is tied onto the actor's head and then arranged.

*tare* (flowing): Wigs similar to *katsura* but worn with the hair flowing. In black, for young male and sometimes female characters. In white, for certain old man (*jō*) characters.

*kammuri* (crown): Official headgear worn by nobles, shrine officials, gods, and Chinese characters, as well as special crowns indicating dragons or demons and the iron crown in *Kanawa*.

*bōshi* (hat): All kinds of hats and caps worn by monks and other characters.

*eboshi* (bird hat): Lacquered hats having a high, crested peak, especially those worn by court nobles in ancient times. Many varieties.

*zukin* (kerchief): Hoods and cowls, especially those worn by members of clergy.

**Bands and Personal Accessories** Traditional Japanese clothing is made of flat fabric without tucks or darts and fitted to the body by folding and tying, without buttons, snaps, or the like. Noh robes, although of particularly lush fabric, are donned and worn in



*eboshi* (lacquered hats): front-folding (*maeori*) for female characters (left), side-folding (*nashiuchi*) for male characters (right), and samurai *eboshi* (center).



*kammuri* (crowns): *ui-kammuri* with pompoms, for noblemen and officials (left), and *sui-kammuri*, for gods (right).



the headpiece  
(*kashira*)



woman's wig  
(*katsura*)

the traditional way. Plain, narrow bands are used over the under layers of robes, and bands of special fabric, sometimes with embroidery, are used on the outside. (The very wide *obi*, or waist band, used with modern kimono developed from the simple waist bands or hip bands of early days.) In addition, headbands are worn by both male and female characters.

*katsura obi* (wig band): Wig bands used for female characters. Narrow bands (about an inch wide) tied around the outside of the wig with the long ends trailing down the back. Usually of a plain ground with foil appliqué and embroidered designs. With red color for young woman characters, without red for older characters.

*hachimaki* (headbands): Headbands for male characters. Plain white for the *nochi-jite* in Warrior Noh and warrior characters in Phenomenal Noh, and tied around the outside of the mask for nobles of the Taira clan. Gold brocade bands are used by noblemen, young boys, and demons.

*koshi obi* (hip bands): Hip bands for both male and female characters. Wrapped around the hips over such three-quarter length outer robes as the hunting cloak, dancing robe, or *mizu-goromo*, or used with *nuihaku* in the *koshimaki* style (draped from the waist).

*personal accessories*: Straw aprons, sleeve ties, tufted ornaments worn by mountain priests, stoles worn by Buddhist clergy, and other special articles.

The use of color in Noh is considered quite important and is governed by many rules and conventions. In describing robes and bands we have distinguished between those "with color" (*iro-iri*) and those without (*iro-nashi*). The word for color (*iro*) is written with the character for bright red (*beni*). The presence of red in the color scheme of a costume is appropriate only for youthful characters. White is also used significantly, to symbolize purity.

The musicians, chorus, and stage assistants usually wear formal male attire: black kimono with white family crest and Noh *hakama*. For more important performances they may dress more elaborately, in *kata-ginu* (pointed-shoulder vests worn over the kimono) or *kamishimo* (matching vests and *hakama*). For *Okina*, the most sacred performance, they wear *noshime* as under robes and *suō* as outer robes (with matching *hakama*) with samurai hats.

**Waki and Kyōgen Costumes** I have described the range of robes and accessories used for the *shite*. The *waki* wears similar but simpler costumes, and the *ai-kyōgen* dresses somewhat differently.

The *waki*, as mentioned, is the quiet, passive, dark character who complements the *shite* and draws out his story. Very frequently the *waki* is a traveling priest, who usually appears in a typical costume. He wears neither mask nor wig but a peaked hood (*sun-boshi*). His collar is of a light, neutral color such as pale green or pale reddish yellow, his under robe a plain *noshime*, and his outer robe a sheer *mizu-goromo*, tied with a damask hip band (Fig. 94). On the fan he carries is a painting in black ink.

As another type of character, such as a retainer or a warrior, the *waki* would dress in subdued costumes similar to those of a *shite* in such a role.

Kyōgen costumes and masks are quite distinct from those of Noh and are used both for the great range of characters—human, supernatural, and animal—in Kyōgen plays and for the *ai-kyōgen*, to whom I will confine this discussion.

Typically, the *ai* is a local man, perhaps a village official. He wears



94. A traveling priest.



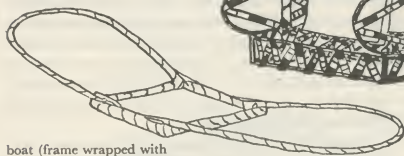
95. Tarō Kaja.



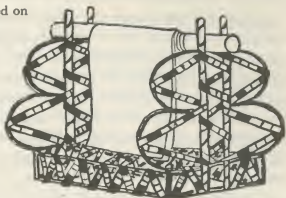
96. A Kyōgen woman.

Smaller objects placed on  
the stage (*oki-dōgu*):

Vehicles (*nori-dōgu*):



boat (frame wrapped with  
a strip of white cloth)



fulling block

98. Examples of stage properties (II).

Among stage props, three varieties can be distinguished: set props (*sue-dōgu*), vehicles (*nori-dōgu*), and placed props (*oki-dōgu*).

The large set props (set on the stage) include a structure which a human being can actually enter: large pavilion, small pavilion, straw hut, board hut, brushwood hut, reed hut, thatched hut, prison, retreat, grave mound, giant rock, and temple bell; and those which cannot be entered: a shrine gate, wicker gate, folding door, tree in a stand, drum on a stand, bell tower, prayer altar, and well curb. (See Fig. 97).

The vehicle props include the carriage for flower-viewing outings, royal carriage, roofed barge, various kinds of boats (Fig. 98), and palanquin.

The placed props are smaller than the set props and are often movable; they include the fulling block (Fig. 98), a spinning wheel, a large wheel for salt-distilling buckets, and the heavy package used in *Koi no Omoni*.

These different types of stage props can be used in four ways:

(1) To bring a character on stage silently. Before the play begins the prop, with the character concealed inside, is carried on. The character can then be suddenly revealed. One example is the retreat hut in *Kuro-zuka*, described in Chapter 6.



(2) In a reverse use, the empty stage prop is brought on before the play begins and left to serve as a kind of background for the first act; then, for the withdrawal (*nakairi*), the *shite* does not exit to the mirror room but enters the prop and has his costume changed while he is inside. For both of these uses a curtain of damask is draped around the outside of the prop frame and pulled down when necessary, revealing the character inside. Most of the stage props are skeletal in structure: a building, for example, is represented by slender columns and a roof. There are a few that are of cloth stretched over a frame, such as the giant rock in *Sesshōseki* or the bell in *Dōjō-ji*. In those plays, the character is revealed not by removing the cloth but by suddenly raising the bell or having the rock split open.

(3) The vehicle props are used to change the scene within a play. The character(s) step inside the frame, indicating that they are being transported. The vehicle is not actually moved about the stage; rather the journey is described in chant. One example of this is the scene in *Yuya* mentioned earlier: the characters journey from the palace down the broad avenue of the capital to a temple on the outskirts of the city for blossom viewing.

(4) The stage prop is used as a foreground or as a substage, as, for example, the sleeping platform in *Kantan* or the well curb in *Izutsu*.

It should be noted that these differences in use are also reflected in differences in placement on the stage. Props used to introduce or conceal a character are placed at the back of the stage, in the *jo* region; vehicles are placed at midstage, to the left or right of center, in the *ha* region; and foreground or substage pieces are placed at the front of the stage, at the center of the *kyū* region.

All properties were at one time made by specialist prop masters. Today, the *shite-kata* are responsible for assembling the set props and managing all the properties.

## PERSONAL PROPERTIES

In contrast to the set props, which are assembled for a single performance, the various small personal properties (Fig. 99) are polished art objects and are made to be used many times. We might think of

them as part of the costumes, for, like the robes, they are realistic rather than sketchy or suggestive in form.

There are hand-held props like the folding fan, the stiff Chinese-style fan, a stick, whip, wand, burning brand, broom, fishhook, fishing net, sickle, halberd, lance, bucket, hand mirror, ice, lute, hand bells, prayer beads, treasure, or branch.

There are also small props attached to the costume, such as long and short swords, the arrow, the straw hat, or a bundle of brushwood.

A. Hand-held:



small water buckets on pole



burning brand



fishing net on pole

B. Affixed to costume:



load of brushwood



rush hat for man

## MULTIPURPOSE PROPERTIES

There are three properties, two of them stage props and one a hand prop, that have a variety of purposes and can be used, even within the same play, to symbolize different things. They are therefore treated differently here, and I have termed them multipurpose props.

One-mat platform (*ichijo-dai*): A wooden, cloth-covered platform (Fig. 100) the size of one tatami mat (about three feet by six feet). Used as a base for certain stage props and also as a symbol of a separate or high place: atop a dais, on a mountain, or in the clouds.

Lidded bucket (*kazura-oke*): Lacquered, lidded bucket. (The word *kazura* can be written with the character for wig or for basket vine.) The *kazura-oke* (Fig. 100) is often placed at center stage and used as a seat for the *shite*. It is used to represent many objects, particularly in Kyōgen, such as a sakè cask, water bucket, or tea container; and its lid is often used as a sakè cup. In the mirror room, it is often used as a seat for the costumed *shite* waiting to appear on stage.

The fan is perhaps the most important property. It has been classed above as a hand-held prop, but it is also a multipurpose prop. It can be used to represent many objects, such as a wine jug, flute, water scoop (Fig. 101), writing brush, or sword in Noh and is used quite graphically in nearly all Kyōgen. Its major function in Noh, however, is as an essential design element in the dance, an extension of the



lidded lacquer bucket



one-mat platform



101. *The fan being used as a water scoop*  
(Matsukaze).

actor's body. There are a number of movement patterns based on the use of the fan, such as *tsuki no ogi* (moon-viewing fan) and *kazashi ōgi* (fan held aloft). The design painted on the fan paper and its color vary with the role and symbolize the type of character: a demon might carry a black-ribbed fan painted with a design of white peonies on a red background; a woman, a black-ribbed fan painted with a design of a courtesan's carriage and seasonal flowers, with only the corners of the fan colored red.



+ 1 +

## SANCTITY AND MAGIC

### Two Supporting Characteristics

Noh is distinguished by two special characteristics. One is the sanctity of the stage space, inherited from the ritual nature of Dengaku (field performance), which developed from ancient agricultural festivals. The other is a kind of magical technique, bequeathed by the tradition of Sarugaku (miscellaneous performances), a form of popular entertainment based on mime, from which Noh developed. Lofty Shinto concepts of sanctity and sideshow magic tricks may seem to be incongruous elements, but they are necessarily connected; they are the two wheels of the vehicle of Noh that transport it freely about the world of fantasy.

#### THE SANCTITY OF SPACE

When Noh is performed in a full, formal program on such felicitous occasions as New Year's Day or the ritual opening of a new stage, the prescribed program of five Noh plays with Kyōgen pieces performed between them is preceded by the ritual Noh known as *Okina*, which includes the Sambasō dance. It is often said that *Okina* both is and is not Noh. Developed from an ancient ritual called *Shiki Samba*, it is considered sacred and is handled in a special way. The actor who performs the role of the mystical, old, godlike *Okina* must become the god. All of the performers who participate devote them-

## Part Three

# STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE



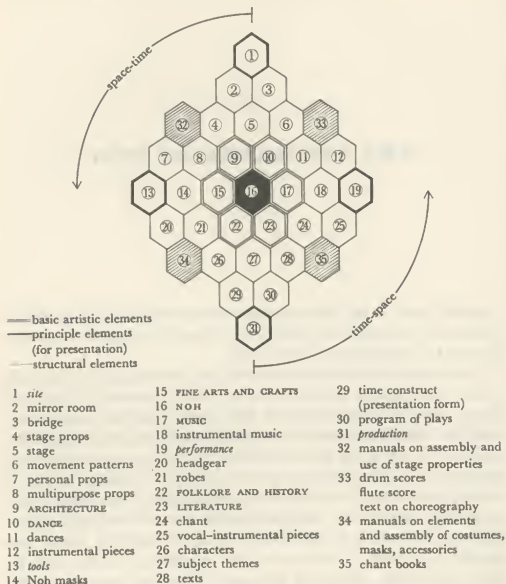


## THE STRUCTURE OF NOH

I would like to begin this discussion of the structure of Noh with a systematic summarization of the many structural elements described in Part II. Please refer to Figure 102.

At the center of the diagram is Noh, and surrounding it are the six fundamental artistic elements: dance, music, literature, folklore and history, fine art, and architecture. Noh could be defined as a stage art with six sides. The elements are equally important and arranged not randomly but in a ring. Like a molecule, Noh is constructed of certain elements in certain positions: to vary the type or position of any of the elements would be to change the basic nature of the drama. While each of the elements can be appreciated for its own artistic or historical interest, Noh comes to life only when the stories from legend and literature are told in rich poetic text, presented as chant with instrumental music, danced in the specially designed stage space with the finely crafted masks and robes. Thus Noh defies comparison with any stage art dominated by a single element.

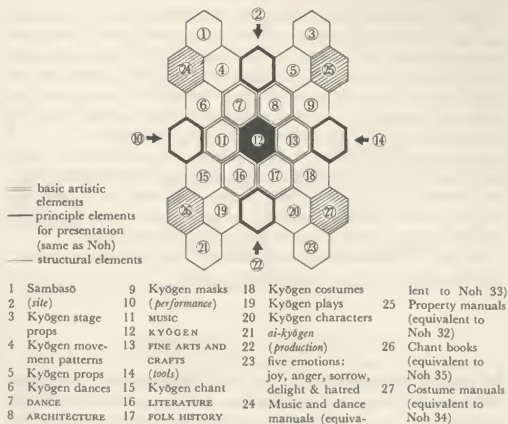
In Figure 102, Noh is shown as the center of the Noh structure, but the six basic artistic elements actually form the core. Clustered around the core of six central artistic elements of Noh are the many structural elements that actually give shape to the drama. These are closely related to but independent of the artistic elements, derived from combinations of them. For example, chant is a product of



102. The elements of Noh.

literature and music, the Noh stage a product of architecture and dance.

On the outside edges of the diagram, surrounded by bold lines, are the four principle elements necessary for the presentation of a play: site, tools of the art, production, and performance. Shown in the hatched hexagons are the information manuals for the use of the



### 103. The elements of Kyōgen.

structural elements. However, since the elements and the rules for combining them are ingrained in the professional performers' minds during years of training, scripts, scores, and costume or prop guides serve as reference manuals rather than prescriptions for production.

Figure 103 shows the artistic and structural elements of Kyōgen, in essentially the same form. Kyōgen differs from Noh in concrete ways, so the contents of the elements of the same name differ somewhat. Kyōgen requires the same four principle elements for presentation: site, tools, production, and performance. The four protruding structural elements are the points of contact with Noh: the *ai-kyōgen*, Sambasō, stage properties, and the five emotions. I will discuss in more detail the other aspects of Figures 102 and 103 and the way the contents of the two are combined in the section on Nohgaku as a sphere appearing later in this chapter.

Noh is a dynamic structural body. It exists not as a mere object but as a living world, created when human beings exist, think, and move within the Noh framework, and the activities thus engendered work on one another. The complex structure that results cannot really be understood as a simple two-dimensional arrangement of inside and outside parts, any more than a modern metropolis can be adequately described by medieval systems of classification.

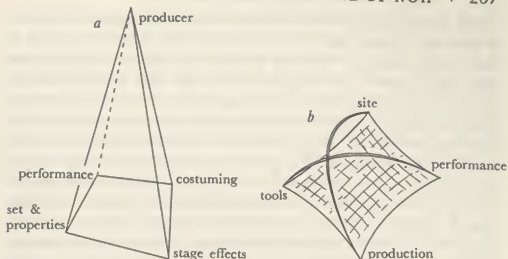
In an organic structural body with such an ecology, there necessarily exist abstract parts corresponding to the concrete parts. I am not referring here to the social structure of the Noh world—schools, families, training systems, performance opportunities—but to abstract theoretical elements with a more direct effect on the drama.

The key to understanding the structure of Noh lies in the relationship between its concrete and abstract parts.

## STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

**Structural Framework** This is the skeleton of Noh, made up of four principle elements (production, performance, site, tools). In modern drama we can identify the principle elements necessary for the presentation of a play as stage facilities, effects equipment, acting, and costuming. The undefined stage area becomes a site for performance only with the installation of sets and other equipment; sound, lighting, and other effects are added to create mood and heighten dramatic expression; the performing consists of the entrances, actions, and the exits of a variety of human characters and sometimes animals or vehicles; finally, the costuming gives a play its perceptible individuality. These principle elements are procured and managed by a producer, so we might depict the framework of a modern theatrical production as a pyramid, with the producer at the peak (Fig. 104).

The framework of Noh, however, might more appropriately be compared to an old-fashioned Japanese fishing net. It is not a rigid skeleton but a flexible net held firm by the equal tension exerted by the four corners, joined by crossed bows of split bamboo. The corners are the site, tools, production, and performance (Fig. 104).



104. The principle elements necessary for the presentation of modern drama (a) and Noh (b).

The site (*za*) of a Noh performance is a designed, solid space, the Noh space, or Noh theater. For any kind of stage play there should exist a performance space of optimum size and shape, perfectly suited to the particular play. The relationship of this vessel to its contents must be unique, like that of sheath to sword. In this sense, the Noh space is perfect and necessary for a Noh performance: the stage is of dimensions deduced from the needs of acting and of a shape that creates a harmonious whole with the form of production; the audience area is determined in size and arrangement by the natural range of the human voice. We might even say that Noh can only be Noh when it is presented and seen in this special site.

The next principle element necessary for the presentation is that of Noh tools. In Noh, the stage properties used to manipulate space, and the masks, robes, accessories, and props that define the characters are all conceived of as partaking of the same level of importance and grouped together. This is related to the fact that a play is performed only once, and it confirms the basic nature of sets, costumes, and props as tools.

A play given by a certain school on a certain stage is not likely to be performed again on that stage for at least a year, and even then it

would be given by a different combination of performers. A number of Noh and Kyōgen are given in a single day's performance, and on some stages there are different programs nearly every day. Under these circumstances, the large sets built for long runs of modern plays or Kabuki would be quite impractical, as would be unique costumes and properties for every role in every play. There are obvious merits to costumes and stage properties of standard components easily assembled for a single performance and then disassembled. Indeed, Noh employs such unit systems, in which a construct is reduced to basic parts, and these parts are then assembled in different combinations for different results. The standard elegant masks, robes, and props are combined in many different ways to give a unique character to each role, and simple frames, platforms, rims, doors, roofs, wheels, branches, and the like are built into spare, elegant stage properties that define and manipulate the space in a different way for each play. These will be discussed in detail in the section on "Subsystems" in Chapter 18.

The third principle element of Noh presentation is what we call production. The producer of a modern play begins with a script and arranges for the theater, sets, lighting, effects, music, and actors necessary to present the play as prescribed in the script. The circumstances of Noh production are quite different. Noh uses neither producer nor script, *per se*. The subtlety and richness of Noh as a stage art result from six centuries of practical experience and theoretical refinement and could never be "arranged for" by one person. Schools and families make certain decisions about the dates and places of performances, but in a sense all of the performers share the responsibility of production, based on a shared purpose. The word "production" is used rather broadly in Noh. We might think of it as a system of software that goes with the hardware of the site. Production involves the choice of plays and their combination into a program, and this is governed not simply by practical considerations but by aesthetic principles and conventions. In other words, the way Noh is played, sung, and danced, as well as the selection and use of masks, robes, and properties, and the use of the space can all vary depending on the version of the play, its place in the program, the plays preceding and following it, the time of year, and even the relative ages of the performers. These are all aspects of production.

The final principle element is performance. This refers not simply to acting but to all types of performance by all participants: song and dance by the *shite*; song, speech, and movement by the *waki*, *ai*, and other actors; instrumental music by the *hayashi*; and unison chant by the chorus. Vocal, physical, and instrumental means of expression are equally important, and this makes possible joint artistic creation. Thus, all performers are on the same level on the stage, and the beauty of Noh is created by a delicate balance of the art of each of the performers. Artistic decisions and actions must all take place on stage, at the time of the performance. The many parts of the performance are all intricately interrelated, and the resulting inner tension creates the excitement. Each Noh is like a high-wire act, where one false step can be fatal to a performance. This may be why Noh is sometimes called an art of crisis.

These four principle elements, site, tools, production, and performance, constitute the flexible framework of Noh, in a relationship of mutual tension and support. It might be said that they correspond to the skeleton in the body, or to what city planners would call the major structure.

**Structural Filler** The filler consists of the structural elements used to fill in the spaces made by the framework, corresponding to the muscles and organs of the body. In Part II these elements were described, and here I would like to point out that they constitute the minor structure of Noh, in four interlocking systems:

(1) the site system—mirror room, bridge, stage, stage props, and movement patterns;

(2) the tools system—masks, robes, headgear, personal props, and multipurpose props;

(3) the production system—program of plays, form of production (time construct), subject theme, characters, and text; and

(4) the performance system—vocal-instrumental pieces, instrumental pieces, instrumental music, chant, and dances.

These systems are not necessarily separate, however. The patterns of movement in space (*kata*) of the site system are obviously related to the dances in the performance system, and the stage properties, to the multipurpose props.

The relationship of framework to filler is like that of major structure

to minor structure. This is comparable to the relationship in a city of the network of roads and squares to the buildings in between, or in the human body of the skeleton to the flesh. This metaphor gives a better sense of the overall structure of Noh than that of the fishing net, which was employed only to make a point about the interrelationship of the principle elements.

### FUNCTIONAL COMPONENTS

The structural fillers described exist as systems within the structural framework of the principle elements, and these constitute the concrete, tangible part of Noh. The abstract, or intangible, part of Noh is what operates the systems. In a city, there are transportation, communications, and security networks; in the body, there are the nervous and circulatory systems. These are not structural parts of the organism but rather the functional networks covering the whole structural body, making it dynamic. These are the systems by which the parts of the body function. If the framework and filler of the concrete part of Noh correspond to major and minor structures, then the functional networks of the abstract part correspond to the infrastructure.

The infrastructure of Noh consists of the aesthetic theories and principles discussed in Part I: the view of time and space in the same dimension and the theory of negative spaces represented by *ma*; the aesthetic consciousness that prefers asymmetry and disharmony, embodied in the principles of heaven-earth-man and *jo-ha-kyu*; the valuing of an unfinished quality in artistic works; the sophisticated concept of progressive abbreviation seen in *shin-gyō-sō*. These permeate every performance of every play and form the basis of the rules and conventions by which all the systems and subsystems operate. As these theories have already been discussed, explanations will not be repeated here, but, in considering the workings of the structure, it is important to keep in mind that all of the minor components are organized and governed by this abstract part of Noh. Indeed, these design concepts of Noh represent a distillation of centuries of Japanese thought and culture and they are what make Noh unique among all forms of drama around the world.



selves to rituals of purification and for a certain period of time before the performance observe the practice of *bekka* (separate fire), or taking food cooked separately from the rest of the family's. On the day of the performance, the *Okina-kazari*, a kind of small altar, is erected in the mirror room, with the masks of Okina and Sambasō, bells and other ritual implements, and consecrated sakè, rice, and salt placed on it. Each performer partakes of these, undergoes a fire ritual (with sparks made by steel and flint), and only then, after this repurification of the self, proceeds onto the stage. Moreover, as he passes beneath the curtain he utters an incantation, the *Okina-watashi*, and after the actor playing Okina bows deeply at center stage the mysterious syllables of the *kami uta* or "god song" begin: "*Tō tō tarari tararira . . .*"

*Okina* consists of three dances. First, is the stately dance of the young man *Senzai* (Fig. 1), with special patterns of stamping that bring strongly to mind both Shinto rituals of the invocation of a god and the existence of the earth. The moment during *Senzai*'s dance when Okina dons the white mask symbolizes the descent of the god. Then, Okina, now become the god, dances with great calm and deliberation the *kamigaku* (divine performance). Finally, Sambasō, a *Kyōgen* actor in a black mask, performs a lively dance with leaps, stamps, and the shaking of bells, clearly suggesting the actions both of demon-quelling and of farming activities. The process of the performance, in other words, corresponds to the three stages of Shinto ritual: a god is invoked who comes forth, dances, and is sent off.

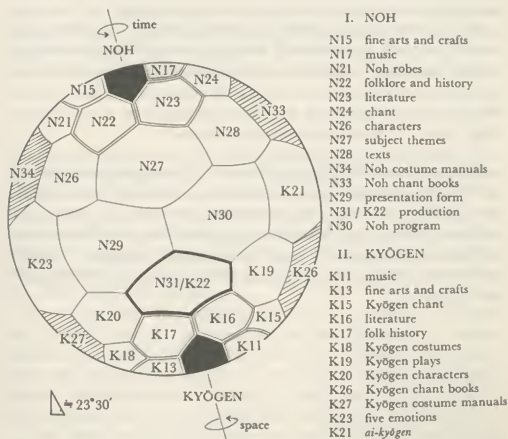
This eloquently bespeaks the deep coloration of Noh with the ritual nature of *Dengaku*, and in this we must recognize the coexistence of both a view of divinity as absolute and a shamanistic worship of the awesome power of nature as spiritual.

The god was the intangible object of faith and nature the tangible, and generally in ceremonial expressions of faith significance was placed in doing rather than in showing: the farming people entrusted all to sacred benevolence, and their prayers of entreaty for bountiful harvests or thanks for good crops were built into the foundations of daily life. Sacred agricultural festivals (Fig. 2) formed the basis for nearly all the entertainment arts of Japan, and in them we see clearly a tendency toward cycles and assimilation with nature that might even be called the foundation of Japanese culture, created by a farming people.

# THE STRUCTURE OF NOH + 271

## NOHGAKU AS A SPHERE

Nohgaku is the general term used for Noh and Kyōgen. As tragedy and comedy, these two dramatic forms might be considered opposites, but they are performed on the same stage, within one program, and even (as *ai-kyōgen*) within one play. Thus, the structure of Noh cannot be understood unless it is considered as part of Nohgaku. Please refer to the diagrams of the elements of Noh (Fig. 102) and Kyōgen (Fig. 103). These figures should be seen not as flat drawings but as polar projections. Or rather, they could be projected onto a sphere, making the globe of Nohgaku, with Noh at one pole and Kyōgen at the other (Fig. 105). We should see Noh and Kyōgen in a polar relationship of close and subtle cooperation.



105. The world of Nohgaku: Noh and Kyōgen shown in a polar, global relationship.

to minor structure. This is comparable to the relationship in a city of the network of roads and squares to the buildings in between, or in the human body of the skeleton to the flesh. This metaphor gives a better sense of the overall structure of Noh than that of the fishing net, which was employed only to make a point about the interrelationship of the principle elements.

### FUNCTIONAL COMPONENTS

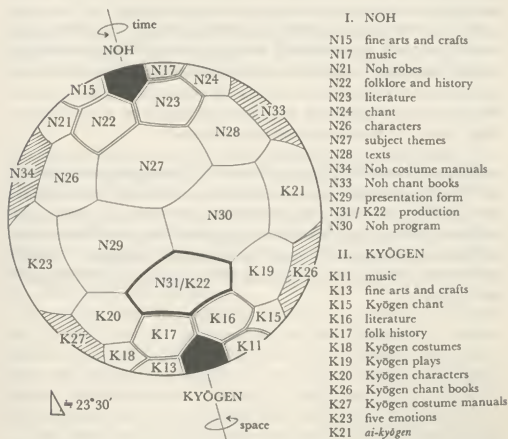
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105. The world of Nohgaku: Noh and Kyōgen shown in a polar, global relationship.

As can be ascertained from the drawing, Noh and Kyōgen share the four principle elements, and this signifies their common framework. When the two diagrams are joined, four hatched spaces are left. These correspond to the oceans, and might be located in the data of the four kinds of reference manuals. The globe of Nohgaku, unlike the earth, has more land than water—that is, the tangible parts of the structure are most numerous. However, the seas of data afford the possibility of infinite variation and interpretation. If one looks for the abstract part of the Nohgaku structure, one might find it in the honeycomb pattern covering the globe. In a hexagonal lattice, all faces touch and each side is of equal strength. This describes the Noh infrastructure.

Now that we have constructed this globe, let us consider what would happen if, like the earth, it were to revolve. In Figure 102, I have shown the elements of the time system, production and performance, in the lower right corner and the elements of the space system, site and tools, in the upper left corner. (This is reversed in Figure 104.) However, if the structure is revolved, then the nature of the elements changes, the site from space to time, the production from time to space. Indeed, in Noh, time and space are seen on a continuum, and they merge as the globe turns, much as the two colors of stripes on a top seem to blend into an intermediate color when it spins.

The earth, of course, not only spins but also revolves around the sun, its axis tilted at an angle of about 23°, giving earth its four seasons. The four seasons are also very important in Noh, and most plays are performed at specified times of the year. The plays that can be performed at any time resemble the regions of the earth where there are almost no changes of season. To extend the metaphor, I might say that this orbit, having a duration of one year, is the cosmological unit of Noh.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF NOH

Like most systematically constructed dynamic structural bodies, Noh is made up of total systems that constitute the whole and sub-systems that give shape to the parts. These two are like the parts of a river system, the tributaries always feeding into the main streams.

### THE TOTAL SYSTEM

The total system consists of what might be called formulae for combining units, and the basis for construction is built upon the idea of the unit system. To construct something under the unit system, one first assembles the materials into units; then the builder uses the formulae to combine the units freely, taking advantage of their interchangeability, into a series of larger assemblies of increasing size, and finally into the whole.

The unit system of composition appears frequently in our daily lives in such guises as component stereos, unit furniture, or system kitchens. In a system kitchen, for instance, the cabinets, sink, oven, range, and refrigerator are all units of a common shape and dimensions or multiples thereof. A variety of kitchen arrangements is possible, depending upon the selection and combination of the units.

What, then, are the fundamental units of Noh? In Part II, I described certain units and referred to the assembly system, but here

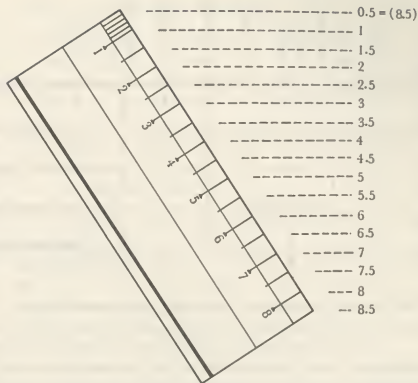
I will attempt to provide an overall view of Noh construction while summarizing what the units are and placing them in systems.

**The Basic Temporal Units** All performing in Noh consists of combinations of the following kinds of units:

- (1) phrase units—the lines (*ku*), usually twelve syllables long, that make up the text of the chant;
- (2) rhythm units—the beat patterns (*te*) of percussion instruments that constitute the concrete rhythm of Noh music;
- (3) melody units—the melodic patterns (*shōfu*) that make up the flute music; and
- (4) action units—movement patterns (*kata*) that constitute the dance.

Each of these units can vary in form and duration, and there are many different types. This means that a common time frame is absolutely necessary for combining them into the overall performance piece, either *hayashi-goto* (instrumental pieces with dance) or *utai-goto* (vocal-instrumental pieces with dance). In other words, there must be a unit of time to make the performance coherent. But this unit of time is not of fixed duration, a set number of seconds. Rather, it is the flexible framework of the eight-beat unit. An eight-beat unit lasts as long as it takes to beat eight. This is a subjective amount of time, just as a “moment” is the time it takes to blink. As explained in the chapter on Noh music, the unit of eight beats is abstract, sometimes collapsed in performance. Noh music might be thought of as having a rhythm of notes. Whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes represent objective relative amounts of time, but the duration of each is not fixed unless the tempo is specified.

To use the eight-beat time unit as a measuring stick in performance, one must have a graded scale of the rhythm. However, Noh music differs from the usual, for each unit runs not from beat 1 through beat 8 to beat 1 of the next unit, but rather begins on the preceding beat 8.5 and extends through beat 8. If this is shown as a ruler, it would begin at 0.5 and end at 8.5, as shown in Figure 106. The centimeter lines correspond to the downbeats or full beats and the half-centimeter marks to the upbeats (*ma*). The reason that the time unit begins on the upbeat or interbeat lies in the reversed-beat nature of Noh music. This section of ruler corresponds to the eight-beat

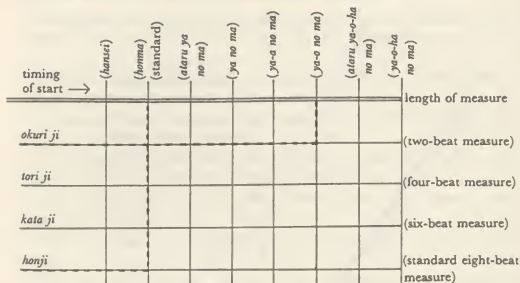


106. The basic rhythm unit of Noh as a measuring stick.

time unit in which Noh music is notated, and on which all the basic temporal units of performance, lines of text, and patterns of rhythm, melody, and movement, are arranged.

In addition to the standard eight-beat measure, there are irregular measures, as described in Chapter 12. Moreover, there are eight possible half-beats within the measure on which the singing of the line of chant can begin. As explained above, these irregular measure lengths and irregular beginning beats are used in joint vocal-instrumental pieces to accommodate text lines of irregular length to the instrumental rhythm framework. One can show the variety of possibilities by locating the starting beats on a horizontal axis and the measure lengths on a vertical axis. One could then plot the length of measure and timing for any phrase of chant sung with instrumental music as in Figure 107. Point A on this drawing represents the standard matching of a line of chant of standard length to the





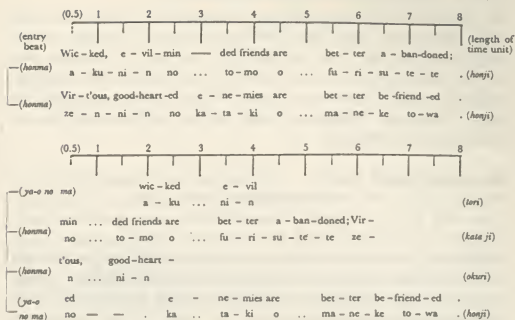
107. A graph of time units in Noh showing irregular measure lengths.

time framework: the first syllable of the line would be sung on beat 8.5 (*honma*), and the time unit would be eight beats long. This just fits our ruler, and is the standard form for the basic temporal unit. This diagram should make it clear that the system of time units, with variable measure lengths and entry beats, can accommodate any line of chant from one to twelve syllables long. Note that B could not occur.

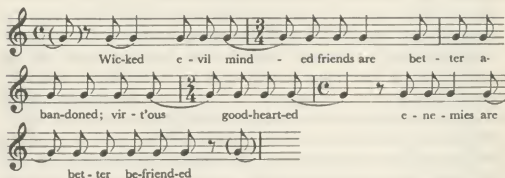
However, this system is not simply a passive method for adjustment. The measure lengths and entry beats are actively and intentionally manipulated as part of the composition process, in order to make the rhythm more complex and thus bring variety to the music. This is well illustrated with two lines from the play *Atsumori*:

Wicked, evil-minded friends are better abandoned;  
Virt'ous, good-hearted enemies are better befriended.

The rhythmic mode of this part of the play is *hira-nori*, in which twelve syllables are ordinarily matched to sixteen half-beats. However, both of these lines are of irregular length: the first is thirteen syllables, the second, fourteen syllables. If we were to compensate by moving the



108. Lines from Atsumori showing how they could theoretically be set to match the scheme of Noh rhythms (a) and how they are actually performed (b).



109. Lines from Atsumori shown rhythmically in Western notation.

syllables around somewhat, we could still begin on the standard beat 8.5 and finish each line within the standard unit of eight beats, as shown in Figure 108a.

In fact, however, the music is composed as shown in Figure 108b, with irregular measures consciously employed, adding interest to the rhythm. If these rhythms are shown in Western musical notation (not showing melody), with notes, rests, and measure markings, it

can clearly be seen that different combinations of beats are used within the phrase (Fig. 109). The six-beat *kata ji* is shown as two measures in  $3/4$  time, the four beat *tori ji* as one  $4/4$  measure, and the two beat *okuri ji* as a  $2/4$  measure. This practice of changing measure lengths is quite common in Western music, especially in songs. Time units of irregular length are not used in purely instrumental pieces, *hayashi-goto*.

**The Basic Spatial Units** The standard unit lengths of the performance space and its components are three *shaku* and six *shaku*. (One *shaku* is 11.93 inches.) These standards were established and applied to architecture during the three centuries of the Edo period (1603–1868), and they are deeply embedded in the Japanese consciousness. These modules serve as a tool for creating ordered space, so to find the actual measurements of some *thing* requires that they be manipulated in some way.

How do we operate these units, three *shaku* and six *shaku*? Three is one tripled and six is three doubled, which suggests a series of doubles:  $1/4$ ,  $1/2$ , 1, 2, 4, 8, and triples:  $1/9$ ,  $1/3$ , 1, 3, 9, 27. If we take the whole numbers from these series and arrange them as shown in Figure 110, we get an equilateral triangle, with 1 at the vertex.

This is called the Platonic lambda. The numbers on the left leg are multiples of two, those on the right leg are multiples of three, and each number on horizontals is 1.5 times the number preceding it. All of the measurements (in *shaku*) and proportions of the Noh performance space match numbers found in this triangle. For example, the dimensions of the main stage are eighteen *shaku* square, of the rear stage, nine by eighteen *shaku*, and of the side stage, nine by four *shaku*.

A rectangle of three by six *shaku*, measurements also found in the triangle, is the size of one tatami mat. This is the standard unit for describing the area of a Japanese room, house, or even a plot of land. It is also a framework for activity. By hearing how many mats large a room is, in other words, most Japanese can immediately imagine the size and shape of the room, and they will have a general idea of its use.

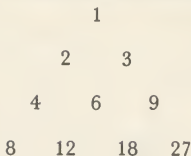
We are told that in ancient times nomadic peoples, gazing up at the night sky, derived their sense of space by finding the positions of



1. Okina is the only play in the repertoire in which the entrance is unaccompanied (the chorus, musicians, Sambasō, Senzai, and Okina all enter silently) and in which the mask is donned upon the stage. A short piece in which the shite blesses the land, it is more of a ritual than a play, since, after donning the mask, the actor becomes the god.



2. An agricultural festival, the precursor of Dengaku. (Note how the sacred space is roped off from the fields.)



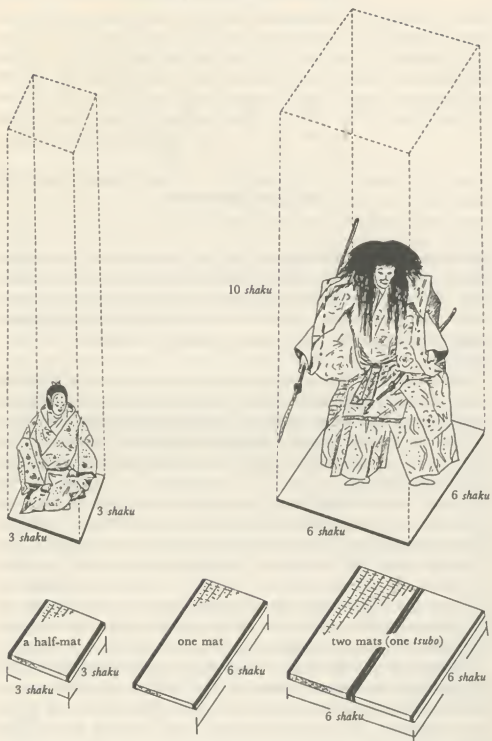
110. *The Platonic lambda.*

planets and certain stars within that vast sea of stars. They sought order in the chaos of the universe before trying to create man-made space. Perhaps our farming ancestors, on the other hand, discovered the smallest possible space first, the center of the system of movement within each self, and created order in space by expansion from the center.

In any case, the basic units of performance space are the positions occupied by the performers. There are three sizes, and they can be described in tatami-mat terms as: (1) half mat, like the flute seat; (2) one mat, like the one-mat platform prop; and (3) two mats, like the *jō-za*, the upstage right area of the stage (one-ninth of the stage area). (See Fig. 111)

Another way of explaining the space is by human activity: a person can sit in a half-mat area, lie down in a one-mat area, or turn around with his arms spread in a two-mat area. Thus in Noh all physical poses and movements, both still and active, can be carried out within one of these spatial units. This is because the Noh stage is of just the right dimensions, deduced from the requirements of performance, made up of these spatial units combined in stages of increasing scale on the basis of dramatic construction.

I have been discussing the spatial units as two-dimensional, but I must add a dimension, because the Noh performance space is not a flat surface but a three-dimensional solid. The main stage space is a transparent cube made up of nine spatial units for action (Fig. 112), each ten *shaku* high (from the stage floor to the lower edge of the crossbeams).



111. The basic spaces of Noh.

**The Unit System and the Shōdan** Referring to the chart of the unit system of Noh (Table 35) will make this discussion on the unit system easier to understand. This system organizes the construction process as a single progression, in stages, from raw materials organized into units all the way to the final consumers, that is, the audience. On this chart the scale increases as we move upward toward the total composition. The time system begins with basic units of a few seconds, combined in stages to make up a full day's program. Similarly, the space system begins with the basic unit of a half mat, about three square feet, and arrives at the total space of the Noh theater, about twenty-two thousand square feet.

Table 35. The Unit System of Noh

Stage in Composition	Time (Drama)	Space (Theater)
Synthesis ↑	Noh program (formal five-Noh program)	Noh space (Noh theater)
Architectural Unit ↑	Category of Noh play (chosen by subject—god, warrior, etc.)	Type of space (Noh stage, seating rooms, etc.)
Assembly Unit ↑	Stage of <i>jo-ha-kyū</i> ( <i>jo</i> stage, <i>kyū</i> stage, etc.)	Architectural sections of the whole Noh stage (stage, bridge, mirror room)
Structural Unit ↑	Part ( <i>shōdan</i> ) made up of various stanzas ( <i>nanori</i> , <i>kuse</i> , <i>medium</i> dance, etc.)	Part of the stage (main stage, rear stage, side stage)
Componential Unit ↑	Stanza ( <i>dan</i> ) of instrumental or vocal segments (one <i>dan</i> of a <i>kuse</i> or of a medium dance)	Region of the main stage ( <i>Jo</i> region, <i>Ha</i> spot, <i>hayashi</i> seats, etc.)
Basic Unit ↑	Segment ( <i>setsu</i> ) (one line of verse of text, one drum pattern, one dance movement, etc.)	Sites ( <i>za</i> ) on stage (flute seat, <i>shite</i> site, <i>kyōgen</i> site, etc.)
Materials	Syllables, sounds, beats, movements, etc.	Wood, stone, metal, cloth, glass, etc.

The nucleus of this system is what I have termed a "structural unit." In terms of space, this structural unit consists of the parts of the stage—the main stage, the rear stage, and the side stage that constitute the Noh stage—upon which the action of the drama takes place and is given form. But this action takes place in time as well, and the structural unit in terms of time is what is called *shōdan* (segment) in Noh, a short, self-contained unit that is perhaps the most important of the building blocks used to construct a Noh play.

Each Noh play is composed of these segments, or *shōdan*, which are set types of speeches, songs, and instrumental pieces performed with set types of movement and dance. Although there are about one hundred different types of *shōdan*, they can be divided into four basic types: spoken (prose) pieces (*katari-goto*), chanted (verse) pieces (*utai-goto*), instrumental pieces (*hayashi-goto*), and silent pieces (*shijima-goto*). The composition of a play is a matter of how these segments are chosen and how they are combined.

#### SPOKEN PIECES (*katari-goto*)

*nanori* (name-saying): a speech of self-introduction and explanation of reason for appearance.

*tsuki-zerifu* (arrival lines): an announcement of arrival at a destination, following a journey (*michiyuki*).

*katari* (recitation): recitation of a literary or historical tale within the play.

*mondō* (questions and answers): dialogue between the *shite* and another character, commonly used to reveal the true identity or past of the character.

#### CHANTED PIECES (*utai-goto*)

*shidai* (entrance song): three-line entrance or thematic song in congruent rhythm; usually sung by *waki* or *shite* following entrance music of same name, but may also be sung by actor or chorus preceding a major song-dance sequence consisting of the *kuri*, *sashi*, and *kuse*. The second line is a repetition of the first, and the syllable pattern is 7-5, 7-5, 7-5, or occasionally 7-5, 7-5, 7-4. Begins on high pitch and moves to low.

*issei* (one voice): high-pitched song in noncongruent rhythm, sung by actor as entrance song or by actor and then chorus preceding



the long instrumental dance (*mai*). Syllable pattern is 5-7, 5-7, 5.

*michiyuki* (travel song): *age-uta* (see below) describing a character's journey. Typically sung by *waki*, often in role of traveling priest, following his entrance.

*sage-uta* (low-pitched song): short song in congruent rhythm with melody centered on the low (*ge*) pitch; frequently precedes an *age-uta*.

*age-uta* (high-pitched song): a song in *hira-nori* rhythm with melody centered around the high (*jō*) pitch. (*Age-uta* and *sage-uta* are general terms describing melodic patterns and refer to a number of specific types of *shōdan*, found in various places in the play.)

*kuri*: short, brilliant song sung in high range and using the highest pitch (*kuri*). It follows a *shidai* or *issei* when sung by a character and precedes a *sashi* when sung by the chorus.

*sashi* (point): abbreviated from *sashi-goe* (point voice) or *sashi-goto* (point piece), a melodic, half-sung, half-spoken voicing of text. The sections of Noh called *sashi* consist of verse, alternating lines of seven and five syllables, delivered smoothly and lightly, in non-congruent rhythm, with interest focused on the meaning of the text. Sung by an actor or group of actors, or by an actor and the chorus.

*kuse*: long, narrative song, the major section of chant in a play; derived from a popular medieval narrative dance form, the *kuse-mai*, which was incorporated into the Noh by Kan'ami. Sung in *hira-nori* rhythm, by the chorus, with one line in the middle (called *age-ha*) sung by the *shite*. When the *age-ha* occurs twice, this section is called *nidan-guse* (two-stanza *kuse*), and when there is no *age-ha*, it is called *kata-guse* (half-*kuse*). In a *mai-guse*, the *shite* dances a set series of patterns during the song; in an *i-guse*, the *shite* sits unmoving at center stage and dances the song only with his heart.

*ake-ai* (exchange): dialogue in chant between the *shite* and the chorus or another actor.

*ronji* (argument): dialogue in *age-uta* with a very regular beat, sung alternately between the *shite* and the chorus, often at the end of the first act, when the *shite* reveals his identity, or between actors before they part.

*kudoki* (lament): pleading outpouring of emotions by the *shite*, sung-spoken in the rapid, noncongruent *sashi* style.

*machi-utai* (waiting song): six or seven lines of *age-uta*, sung by

the *waki* after the *shite* withdraws, after the *ai-kyōgen* has finished, and leading to the entrance of the *nochi-jite*, the character in its true form.

*waka* (poem): poem in the classical thirty-one syllable form (5-7-5-7-7 syllables), often a quotation from ancient poetry anthologies. Delivered in a special mode of speech used for poetry recitation. Usually follows the long instrumental dance (*mai*).

*kiri* (cut, finale): the term refers both to the final section of a play and, as *kiri-ji*, to a certain kind of concluding section with a rapid rhythm, derived from *kiri-byōshi*, the final beats.

#### INSTRUMENTAL PIECES (*hayashi-goto*)

In addition to the spoken and sung sections of each play, there are *shōdan* of movement with purely instrumental music—entrances, mid-exits, playthe long dance, transitions, and certain important moments of emotion or action. These musical pieces are listed and described in Chapter 12.

#### SILENT PIECES (*shijima-goto*)

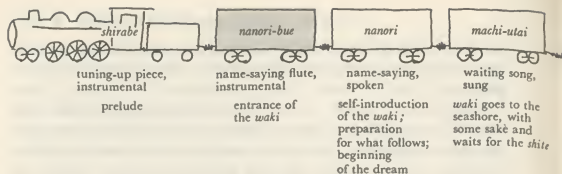
*su no de* (plain entrance): the entrance of a character with no music or speech of any kind.

*su no nakairi* (plain withdrawal): the silent exit of the *shite* following the first act.

*su no monogi* (plain putting on of robes): an onstage change of costume with no sound.

These are the major types of *shōdan*, but there are many others. The important thing to understand is that a Noh is composed of a series of *shōdan*, sections in set forms with defined uses. The process of composition is a process of selection and combination of *shōdan*, in accordance with a number of rules and conventions.

We might think of the series of *shōdan* comprising Noh as a series of passenger and freight cars in a train (Fig. 114). There are many types of each: coach, first-class, sleeping, and dining cars for passengers, for example, and open, covered, tank, and container cars for freight. The performance of Noh is ultimately a matter of the songs and instrumental pieces, and we can consider speeches and combination of silent actions as variations on these. The chant

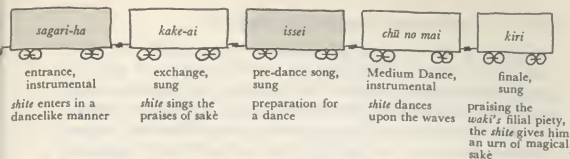


pieces might be compared to passenger cars and the instrumental pieces to freight cars; a train could then be formed to suit our needs by choosing from among the many types of cars in the yard and stringing them together. Noh is composed in just the same way: pre-existing types of sections are chosen and combined in accordance with the objectives of the play. Let us take as an example the shortest Noh play, *Shōjō*, to see how the *shōdan* were combined.

One night a virtuous young man has a strange dream. He follows the instructions given him in the dream and uses an interesting method of selling saké at the market. He is very successful and gradually grows quite wealthy. Among his customers is one who comes quite regularly and drinks his fill without ever getting drunk. The man finds this curious and one day asks the customer who he is. He replies that he is really a *shōjō* who lives by the water, and then departs. The man takes some saké with him to the riverbank, where he sits and waits. Then the *shōjō* appears, drinks the saké, and dances. Praising the man's faithful devotion, he presents him with an urn of saké that will never run dry.

A *shōjō*, I might add, is a childlike, wine-loving sprite with magical powers, who likes to dance playfully. The story line of the play is told, as our drawing of the train in Figure 114 shows, in eight sections, performed in about fifty minutes. The locomotive is the *shirabe*, a piece played by the musicians in the mirror room before every Noh in order to tune up.

The *shōdan* are nothing more than parts of a framework for performance, so the contents of each differ with each play. Naturally the contents of the *nanori* (name-saying), for example, depend on the character and the story, as do the contents of all of the chant pieces.



114. Basic units combined like railway cars; the example given is *Shōjō*, the shortest *Noh* play.

Even two plays with exactly the same series of types of *shōdan* differ completely in contents of chant, just as two trains with the same kinds of cars in the same order would carry different passengers and freight. There are a few small exceptions: a *shidai* of the same words and melody is sung in both *Ataka* and *Kuro-zuka*; the same *kiri* is sung in both *Aoi no Ue* and *Michimori*; and when *Iwafune* is performed as a half-*Noh*, the waiting song used to open the second act is taken from *Ukon*.

Vocal *shōdan* of the same form and occasionally the same words are used for many different plays, so it goes without saying that the instrumental pieces are all standard types used in many plays. The *sagari-ha* used in *Shōjō*, for example, is a cheerful *hayashi* piece for the dancelike entrance of a sprite, and it is also used in *Murogimi* and *Seiōbo*, for the entrance of a benevolent goddess. The medium dance (*chū no mai*) is a gentle dance performed by women and fairies in many plays, including *Kochō* (by the spirit of a butterfly) and *Ukon* (by the spirit of a cherry tree).

I hope it is clear from this explanation of structural units that *Noh* employs what to modern eyes is tantamount to a unit system, whether or not the creators were conscious of the systems of the future they anticipated.

The structural units are themselves made up of what we call componential units, which are in turn composed of basic units. In the long instrumental dances, these are the stanzas (*dan*). The medium dance, for example, is usually performed in three stanzas. Each stanza consists of interwoven strings of drum patterns (*te*), flute melody patterns (*shōfu*), and dance movement patterns (*kata*). To take an example in the spatial category, the main stage, a structural unit, is

composed of three regions, or components, *jō* (upstage), *ha* (center) and *kyū* (downstage). The regions are then composed of sites (*za*), which are the basic elements. The *jō* region, for example, is made up of the *jō-za* (*shite* spot), the *daishō-mae* (spot in front of the drums), and the *fue-za-mae* (spot in front of the flute). Moreover, the performance (temporal) and spatial systems are interrelated by the position of the dancer and the types of patterns used in the long dances.

Moving up the chart in Table 34 as the scale of the units increases, one comes to assembly units, made up of structural units. The basic principle governing combination of these units is the principle of *jō-ha-kyū*, and as discussed in Part I, this applies to each play and each program of plays. Thus, within a play is found the *jō* level, the *ha*, in three levels, and the *kyū* level. With a story outline and choice of *shōdan*, one can easily assemble a play, the compositional order of the *shōdan* is not random; on the contrary, it follows this constructional principle. This is the five-stage *jō-ha-kyū* construct (described in Chapter 4). In other words, *shōdan* are combined into assembly units, levels of *jō*, *ha*, and *kyū*. This can be seen in *Shōjō*, for example:

*jō* level—*nanori-bue* and *nanori* (introduction);

*ha* level—(1) *machi-utai*; (2) *sagari-ha*, *kake-ai*, *issei*; and (3) *chū no mai* (development); and

*kyū* level—*kiri* (conclusion).

Although it is quite short, as you can see, even this play has five levels, maintaining the integrity of the principle.

Finally, the level of one whole is reached. This is not the highest level, however, of the unit system. Plays must always be performed within the framework of a program, formally the five-play construct. In other words, as a dramatic form, Noh is a cycle of five plays, one each on the subjects of gods, men, women, lunacy, and demons, in that order. Modern-day programs of one or two Noh with one Kyōgen resemble a-la-carte suppers, rather than full-course dinners. The five-play cycle is both an aesthetically-ordered goal of production and at the same time an overall single story, flowing grandly through a whole day.

In the spatial system, the Noh stage (stage, bridge, and mirror room) corresponds to a Noh play, and the Noh theater (Noh stage, seats, dressing rooms, and the like) to a full day's program. This is the complete unit system.

## THE SUBSYSTEMS

There are a number of subsystems by which the parts of the total system are organized. Here two of the most important will be examined: the subsystem of stage properties and the subsystem of costuming.

**The Stage-Property Subsystem** In Chapter 16 I introduced the stage properties (*tsukurimono*) and explained their use. The question remains, however, of why the extremely simple forms of ancient times continue to be preserved today. This is often explained by asserting that this practice derives from the early days when Noh was often performed in rural areas and objects were crafted by hand from materials easily obtained anywhere. Such a shallow explanation is inadequate, however: each structure is of just the necessary size, with unit dimensions in common with those of the performance space, of single-material construction—that is, structure and assembly become one when only one type of material is used—and of spendid avant-garde design well suited to the clean, simple lines of the Noh stage.

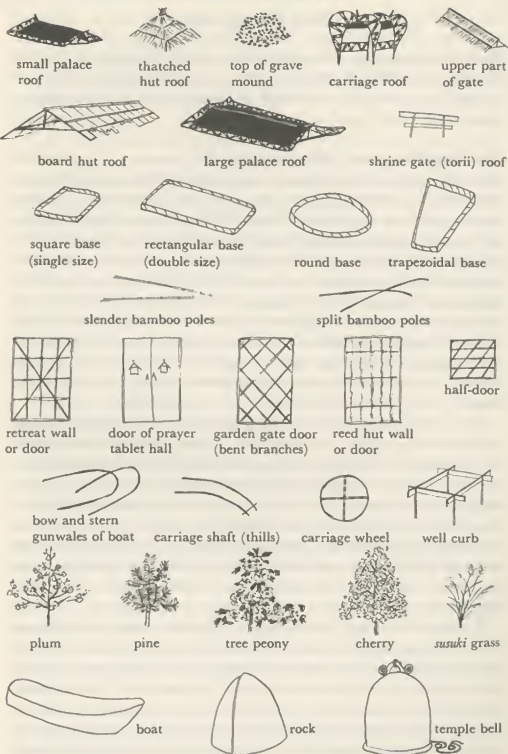
The method of constructing stage props is quite simple: structural components are affixed to a base that is a simple frame of sturdy split bamboo bent to the desired shape and wrapped in white cloth strips. In addition to the standard square base, there are round, rectangular, and trapezoidal bases, in a variety of sizes. At the corners of a square base column parts are erected, and then a roof part is added to make a building prop; branches are held vertical by a round base to make a standing tree. Please look at the drawings of the parts and assembled properties (Figs. 115–16). There are many others besides those illustrated.

There can be many variations on each basic model of stage prop. A good example is the boat. The basic model is a square base with loops of split bamboo affixed on two sides to form the bow and stern; this suggests the image of a traditional Japanese boat. The extremely simple boat is considered a masterpiece among the stage props, and it is frequently used in this basic form. Parts may be added, however, or the basic model form may be combined with other types of props to create different types of boats. The basic model described is used

The consecrated space where such acts could be carried out was called *himorogi*. This concept of a specially marked space has existed in Japan from ancient times. Pieces of cut paper are hung on the sacred *sakaki* tree (*Cleyera japonica*) or woven into a rope that encircles a sacred area into which the god is temporarily invoked. This can be set up or dismantled at any time, in any place. We see this today at festivals and also at ground-breaking ceremonies. Noh is a kind of festival, and it is proper to begin, as in *Okina*, by causing the god to dwell in the actor and symbolizing the sanctification of the space by hanging a specially adorned sacred rope around the upper beams of the stage.

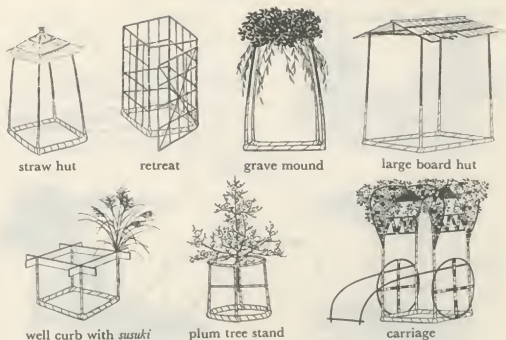
The place where Noh is performed, therefore, cannot be thought of without considering the sanctification of space. The gods arrive and depart in Noh, transcending time and space: they appear in plays such as *Okina* about gods; their descent is symbolized in plays in which temporary altars are erected; and their existence is suggested in plays with shrine mediums called *miko*. In addition to these manifestations or suggestions of deities, there is a certain sacred quality that runs deep and constant in the plays, in the dances developed from ancient rituals, in the cries of the drummers that sound like invocations, and in the stampings of feet that seem to be godly echoes of the sacred spirit itself.

More important, however, than these many specific instances symbolizing sanctity, is something intrinsic that resides within the structure of the Noh drama. The action of a play ends with a strong, shrill note on the flute and the two final stamps of the *shite*, or main actor, and then silence descends for a moment. The performers file quietly down the bridge and disappear behind the curtain, and there remains the strikingly fresh pine painted on the wall at the back of the bare wooden stage—a nucleus of sanctity exists in that very time and space, with no words, no sounds. This transition of the stage is perhaps especially striking to the architect, who is always deeply concerned with time and space. Indeed, the architect Hiroshi Ōe has said, "I cannot help but remember [when I see Noh] the sense of space and the mysterious passage of time I experienced as villagers filed out silently after mass in a pre-Roman church, erected more than a thousand years ago, in a small village in a remote part of northern Spain."



115. Examples of stage-property parts.





116. Examples of assembled stage properties. (See also Figs. 97, 98.)

in *Funa Benkei* and a number of other plays. Some of the variations, illustrated in Figure 117, are:

Boat with mooring line (*tomozuna-tsuki*)—the basic model with a mooring line tied to the bow. Used in *Shunkan*.

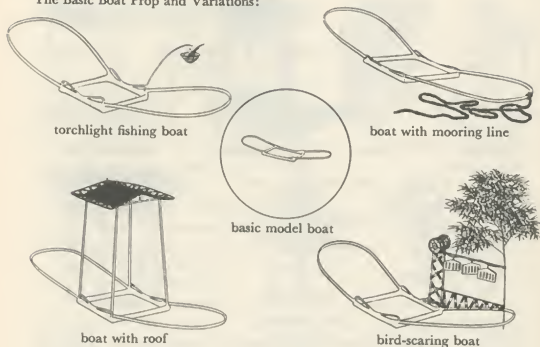
Torchlight fishing boat (*kagari-bune*)—a basket with a small fire in it is affixed to the end of a pole and attached to the side of the basic model boat. Used in *Michimori*.

Bird-chasing boat (*torioi-bune*)—a bamboo tree and a tall drum stand are attached to the left side of the boat, and a row of wooden clappers hung between them. Used in *Torioi-bune*.

Roofed boat (*yakata-bune*)—A boat with a roof, a combination of the basic model boat prop and the small pavilion prop. Used in *Eguchi*.

Performers actually enter some stage properties—boats, huts, palaces, carriages—and the dimensions of these are standardized. The base is three *shaku* square, the columns 5.8 *shaku* high. These are derived from the size of the average Japanese man. An actor 5.6 *shaku* tall wearing some headgear is able to stand in one of these

## The Basic Boat Prop and Variations:



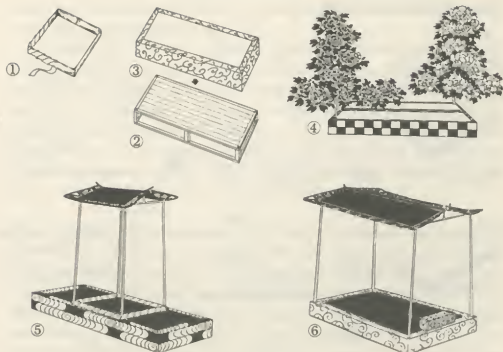
117. Examples of boat properties.

props. Considering the various units of stage space as stationary volumes of space, one might think of these stage properties as mobile units of space.

These mobile units come in two sizes, single and double. The actor can stand or sit in the single size and lie down or dance in the double size, which is six *shaku* by three *shaku*, the size of one tatami mat.

In addition to these stage properties that actors can enter, there is a multipurpose property that is also a kind of mobile unit. This is the one-mat platform (*ichijo dai*), a wooden base literally the size of one tatami mat and 0.8 *shaku* high. There are holes in the four corners for inserting trees or columns to make buildings and for a performance the platform is covered with a cloth, called *daikake*. For use on stage the prop is covered with a silk cloth. This multipurpose property is almost always used in combination with stage properties or parts. Some of the uses are illustrated in Figure 118.

In that figure, one can see illustrated the uses of the one-mat platform as a base for a small single-size and for a large double-size



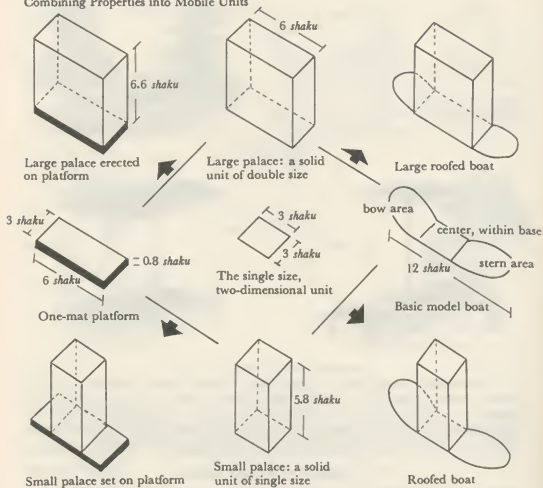
1 The single-size square base for a stage prop, the area of half a tatami mat 2 The wooden one-mat platform. 3 The damask platform cover. 4 Two platforms with peony trees. 5 The small palace. The free-standing prop with its own square base is set upon a one-mat platform. 6 Large palace. The columns supporting the roof are inserted directly into the corner holes of the platform. Used in *Kantan* (notice the pillow).

118. Examples of platform properties.

palace. These are not independent stage properties like the single-size retreat hut or the double-size large board hut (Fig. 115), however. The two palaces are used with platforms. The small palace is constructed of a roof and columns on a square base and set centered on a platform. The large palace has no separate base: the four columns supporting the roof are inserted directly into the corner holes of the platform. For a performance of Noh, the roof and column assembly and the platform are carried on separately and then set up on stage.

Another use of the platforms is in the Noh *Shakkyō*, when a large, quadruple-size dais is created out of two platforms pushed together, with peony trees of red and white inserted at two opposing corners.

## Combining Properties into Mobile Units

119. *The basic spatial unit and its relation to properties.*

In this play, one or two lions do a lively dance in which they leap onto and off of the platform.

When a palace prop is added to the boat prop, they both share a common base. The basic boat prop defines area but not height, so the addition of the large or small palace prop describes a three-dimensional space. From the sketch in Figure 119, it may appear that the roofed boat with a small palace is the single size and that with a large palace is the double size. However, in performance, characters stand or sit not only within the central base area but also to the fore and aft. Whatever the area of the roof structure, the boat

is always twelve *shaku* from bow to stern, so it could be said that it is potentially of quadruple size.

It should be clear from this that the unit dimensions of the stage properties are in complete accord with the unit dimensions of the performance space, incidental details aside. This consonance is certainly no coincidence. Stage properties are basically tools for the manipulation of performance space, so it is quite natural that the two systems share a concrete numerical order. We might say that the stage-prop system is a system for merging assemblies of parts with the basic structural units of Noh performance and space.

**The Costuming Subsystem** In modern theater, the important elements in outfitting a character for the stage are makeup and costume. Production begins with the selection of an actor of appropriate age and looks, whose face is then made-up as required for the role and whose body is then dressed in specially made and fitted costumes. In Noh, however, the face and robes are prescribed for each role, regardless of who performs the part on a given occasion. These are tools for production, decided on in advance. Combining mask and robes is much like putting together a doll with interchangeable heads and sets of clothing. The doll is assembled from two kinds of parts, just as the Noh actor is dressed with two kinds of tools, both of which exist in a binary relationship. For a given mask, different types of characters can be created by exchanging the robes, just as different types of doll characters can be created with a given head by changing the clothes. A given set of robes, however, indicates a general type of character, even if the mask is changed, just as a doll's body dressed a certain way defines the character, even if we change the heads. What is at work here, as was explained in the chapter on costumes, is a sophisticated technique of simplification, by which standard masks and costumes are combined in many different ways to create a variety of characters.

Noh is essentially theater of the mind, so there is no need to focus interest on costumes and emphasize unique character by appearance. The heroes of the two plays *Tomonaga* and *Michimori* are members of warring clans, but they share the tragic experience of defeat and death in battle. Thus the same costume is used for these two different characters, members of two different clans, in two different plays.

Chapter 15 described the types of robes, trousers, and accessories that make up the costumes, but now it is appropriate to begin the discussion of the costuming system by looking at the way in which the robes can be combined. Traditional Japanese clothing consists of elements of standard shape and length that are mixed and matched. The basic elements of formal dress are the kimono, the waist band (*obi*), an over-jacket (*haori*), and long, stiff divided skirts or trousers (*hakama*). These garments are all of simple design and can be fitted to all different body types when they are put on, being tucked under, folded in, and tied as necessary. In a variety of different fabrics, they can be selected, layered, and combined as required: simple wool kimono with *obi* for daily wear, bright silk kimono and *obi* for festive occasions, black silk with family crests for formal occasions, with *haori* and *hakama* added for greater formality or for warmth. Noh robes and trousers are of particularly beautiful weave and design, but in shape and use they are essentially refined versions of these basic garments, the ordinary dress of the medieval Japanese, from emperors to fisherman. Thus, they employ all the practical advantages of this system of clothing. Costume elements have been classified simply as under kimono (*kitsuke*), outer robes (*uwagi*), and trousers (*hakama*), but strictly speaking, they should be classified as outer robes (wide-sleeved, three-quarter length cloaks and vests, often of light material); upper robes (small-sleeved full-length kimono of heavier fabric); the same types of small-sleeved kimono worn as inner or under robes; and *hakama*. These can be combined as shown in Table 36.

Types of garments connected by lines in the table can be worn together. The *suō* and *hitatare* are matching suits of robes and trousers, but because the outer robe can be worn with other types of trousers, they have been divided here. Also, although it is not shown on the chart, remember that the full, loose *sashinuki* trousers and sometimes the *hitatare* trousers are worn over stiff *ōkuchi*, to give them shape.

Now let me show how for a given mask, the character can be changed by changing the robes (Fig. 37). To facilitate understanding, the example uses the robes traditionally worn by the female characters described in Chapter 15. The mask is a *ko-omote*, which shows that the character is young and beautiful.

As can be seen, then, with one face, the *ko-omote*, female characters of

Table 36. Possible Combinations of Costume

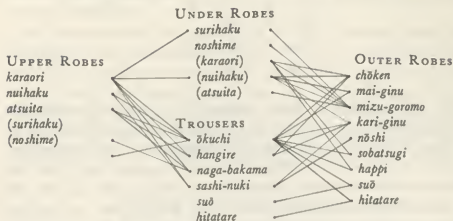


Table 37. One Mask, Many Characters

MASK	COSTUME	CHARACTER	PLAY
ko-omote	(1) karaori kinagashi	lady-in-waiting	Senju
	(2) karaori nugisage	deranged courtesan	Hanjo
	(3) tsubo-ori ōkuchi	court poet	Sōshi-arai Komachi
	(4) chōken ōkuchi	ghost of Rokujō, a crown princess	Nonomiya
	(5) chōken koshimaki	daughter of Ki no Arisune	Izutsu
	(6) mogidō	heavenly maiden	Hagoromo

many types and classes, from a lowly waiting woman to a heavenly maiden, can be created by varying the combinations of robes.

Five elements are required for the costumes listed above, and they can be combined as shown in the diagram below; and if each type of garment is assigned a letter, as each type of assembled costume has been assigned a number, then we have a system of notation for combining elements, as below:

$$(1) = A + B$$

$$(2) = A + B + C$$

$$(3) = A + B + E$$

$$(4) = A + C$$

$$(5) = A + C + D$$

$$(6) = A + D$$

$$(7) = A + D + E$$

$$(8) = A + E$$

Only the basic garments of the costumes for a just a few roles are indicated here, but the system can be applied to all costumes for all roles. Thus, if one knows the range of elements, the rules for combination, and the costume prescribed for the character type, then assembling the costume would seem to be an easy matter. Indeed, the basic principles, as explained, are quite simple, but in practice costuming a character is somewhat more complicated. For each character in each play, each type of garment occurs in many colors, patterns, designs, and weaves, so before the robes are combined a process of selection must take place, based on the version of the play given, the season, the personal preferences of the performer, and the like. Thus, actual costuming requires considerable experience and familiarity with conventions. In summary, the dressing of the character involves a system of selection and combination of elements, in accordance with set rules and conventions.

The other part of the costuming system is what corresponds to the interchangeable heads of dolls. For purposes of illustration, let me look at the different characters one could create by changing masks for a given costume, in this case *chōken ōkuchi*. This is costume number 4 above, the combination of an under robe of satin-weave silk with foil appliqué, plain-colored stiff *hakama*, and a loose, 3/4-length outer robe of light material with wide sleeves (Table 38). In studying the table, it becomes apparent that the basic combination of robes called *chōken ōkuchi* is used for female ghosts as spirits, although the choice of colors depends on the age of the character.

This explanation of the systems of robes and masks may give the impression that a mask and set of robes is prescribed for each character in each play. This is in effect generally true, but these two systems are mutually dependent and very flexible; in fact, for some characters, a number of combinations of mask and robes are possible. In the play *Kinuta*, for example, the ghost of the wife can be costumed in twelve different ways, the choice depending upon which costume




most closely approximates the actor's interpretation of her emotional state (Table 39).

In the costuming of a character, the face is always paired with a hairstyle—that is, mask and wig are used in combination. There are certain *shite* who are bare-headed (*su-gashira*), but these are the few living male characters, in such plays as *Mochizuki* and *Hachi no Ki*, who are also bare-faced (*hitamen*). Mask and wig are employed for the majority of *shite* roles. There are three categories of wigs (described in Chapter 15): the *katsura* (wig), a rectangular piece of cloth with

Table 38. One Costume, Many Roles

COSTUME	MASK	CHARACTER	PLAY
<i>chōken ōkuchi</i>	— <i>Ko-omote</i>	vengeful ghost of Lady Rokujō	<i>Nonomiya</i>
	— <i>Ō-onna</i>	goddess	<i>Kazuraki</i>
	— <i>Fukai</i>	spirit of plantain plant	<i>Bashō</i>
	— <i>Yase-onna</i>	ghost of Princess Shokushi	<i>Teika</i>
	— <i>Uba</i>	ghost of old woman	<i>Obasute</i>

Table 39. Twelve Possible Costumes for *Kinuta*

MASK	POSSIBLE	COMBINATION
<i>Deigan</i> (middle-aged woman, with gold eyes)		<i>shironeri tsubo-ori koshimaki</i> (White upper robe hiked up around hips, worn over inner robe draped from waist)
<i>Yase-onna</i> (thin woman)		<i>shironeri tsubo-ori ōkuchi</i> (White upper robe hiked up at hips, worn over wide, stiff trousers)
		white <i>mizu-goromo ōkuchi</i> (Lightweight white "water" robe, worn over wide, stiff trousers)
<i>Ryo no onna</i> (ghost woman)		<i>karaori tsubo-ori ōkuchi</i> (Brocade upper robe hiked up around hips, worn over wide, stiff trousers)

NOTE: The *shironeri*, worn as an upper robe, is one kind of small-sleeved satin-weave kimono, of white ground with a design figure woven in.

## THE MAGIC OF TECHNIQUE

If sanctity is based on a dialogue with the gods, then magic is a product of human faith and knowledge that comes from daily life.

In addition to the rural Dengaku, early Noh also incorporated Sarugaku, developed from a variety of entertainment forms, including comic skits, mime, dances, popular songs, acrobatics, and magic acts by *shushi* or *noronji*. Their art was related to *hōe*, in which the laws of magic were acted out as entertainment, much as sacred rituals are performed as dances in *Okina*. Because they donned elaborate costumes and moved quickly about, their performances were also called *shushi-hashiri*, or magician-running. Later this grew independent, and magic technique remained in Noh in name, concept, and structure. Even today *shushi-hashiri* is the name used for the *Okina* that is danced, as it has been for centuries, outdoors at the temple Kofuku-ji and the Kasuga Shrine in Nara.

The word "magic" refers both to acts or techniques of conjuring and to the almost religious calling up of certain phenomena using the power of supernatural beings and mystical forces. Traditionally, in European culture, magic has been divided into white and black: white magic is good and uses the power of angels, and black magic is evil and uses the power of devils. In Japan, however, magic is seen not as the power of other beings but as a supernatural power that all human beings possess when they believe without doubt—that is, it is the power of the will. There is, for example, psychic photography, an act we might call semi-spiritual, in which the subject, in some unspecified space, faces the camera, focuses his attention, and thinks of something, causing the image to appear on film. This is magic, an act intended to bring about a phenomenon that transcends physical nature by the mystical power of the human soul.

In Noh, if the mask of *Okina* symbolizes sanctity, and its donning indicates the descent of the god, then the other masks, in particular the woman masks, symbolize magic. Just before going onstage the *shite* sits before a mirror (in the mirror room) facing his own reflected image and puts on the mask. As he gazes intently through the tiny pupil eyeholes at the figure in the mirror, a kind of willpower is born, and the image—another self, that is, an *other*—begins to approach the actor's everyday internal self, and eventually the self and this other

hair affixed, which is tied to the actor's head and then arranged (pulled back or forward and tied); the *tare*, a hairpiece similar in construction to the *katsura* but allowed to hang loose; and the *kashira*, a manelike headpiece that is donned like a cap. There are many variations within each category, and the way the major types of wigs are combined with different types of masks is shown in Table 40.

Noh has traditionally been performed by men only, who naturally wore wigs and masks to play female characters, and this is why third category plays, in which the main character is usually a woman, are called Wig-Piece (*kazura-mono*) Noh, or Woman Noh. The wigs mentioned in Table 40 are described in detail below.

*katsura*: the most universal type of wig for female characters; long, straight, black hair, reaching halfway down the back, is parted in the middle, aligned with the strands of hair painted on the mask, pulled back softly, and tied with a special paper cord at the nape of the neck. It is like a ponytail that covers the ears. The long tail is

Table 40. Combining Wigs and Masks

katsura wigs	— <i>katsura</i> —	<i>Waka-onna</i> , <i>Ko-omote</i> , <i>Ōō-onna</i> , <i>Fukai</i> , <i>Shakumi</i> , <i>Yase-onna</i> , as well as masks of violent emotions, such as <i>Deigan</i> , <i>Hashihime</i> , <i>Hannya</i>
	— <i>uba-gami</i> —	<i>Uba</i> , <i>Rōjō</i> , <i>Komachi</i> , <i>Yamamba</i> , etc.
	— <i>naga-katsura</i> —	<i>Waka-onna</i> , <i>Ko-omote</i> , <i>Ōō-onna</i> , <i>Hashihime</i> , <i>Hannya</i>
	— <i>midare-bin</i> —	<i>Masugami</i> , others
	— <i>naga-kamoji</i> —	<i>Hannya</i> , in special use
	— <i>kasshiki-katsura</i> —	<i>Kasshiki</i> , <i>Ko-omote</i> , <i>Ōō-onna</i> , others
tare wigs	— <i>jō-gami</i> —	<i>Kō-jō</i> , <i>Asakura-jō</i> , others
	— <i>kuro-tare</i> —	<i>Imawaka</i> , <i>Jūroku</i> , <i>Chūjō</i> , <i>Heida</i> , <i>Kantan Otoko</i> , <i>Shintai</i> , <i>Ko-omote</i> , <i>Ōō-onna</i> , <i>Deigan</i> , others.
	— <i>shiro-tare</i> —	<i>Mai-jō</i> , <i>Shiwa-jō</i> , <i>Warai-jō</i> , others
kashira wigs	— <i>aka-gashira</i> —	<i>Beshimi</i> masks, <i>Tobide</i> masks, <i>Kurohige</i> , <i>Shishiguchi</i> , <i>Shikami</i> , <i>Hannya</i> , <i>Ja</i> , others
	— <i>kuro-gashira</i> —	<i>Dōji</i> , <i>Jidō</i> , <i>Mikazuki</i> , <i>Taka</i> , <i>Ayakashi</i> , <i>Yase-otoko</i>
	— <i>shiro-gashira</i> —	<i>Akujo</i> masks, masks for elderly forms of characters using red and black headpieces

covered by the robes. The wig band circles the forehead and is tied in a bow at the back of the head, and the two long ends trail down the outside of the costume.

*uba-katsura* (granny wig): used only for old-woman roles. The style is the same as the *katsura* but the hair is grey and white.

*naga-katsura* (long wig): the same shape as the *katsura* but with longer hair that almost reaches the knees, tied with a bright-colored cord and allowed to hang down the outside of the costume.

The dishevelled-tresses wig (*midare-bin*) has loose strands of hair at the left temple, or sometimes on both sides. It represents the unkempt hair of a deranged woman.

*naga-kamoji* (long switch): reaches to the floor, the fabled "body-length black hair" that was the mark of a beautiful woman in the Middle Ages. Today it is used only in the play *Aoi no Ue*.

*kasshiki-katsura* (acolyte wig): used for both male and female characters, has rounded bangs. It is pulled back and tied with a paper cord somewhat higher than the *katsura*. A wig band is not used.

*jō-gami* (old-man wig): arranged in the traditional male style: the hair is pulled back and tied at the back of the head, then the ponytail is doubled over and the ends brought forward over the top of the head. (This style is seen today on sumo wrestlers.) The hair of the wig is silver and gold, indicating that the character is an old man. The ends of the hair extend quite far forward, out over the mask.

*tare* (loose-hair wigs): like *katsura* allowed to hang freely, the hair parted in the middle and trailing down over the shoulders. There is no hair just at the part on these wigs, so some kind of crown or cap is worn with them. The black (*kuro*) *tare* is used for young male gods, female gods, or dragon gods, and the white (*shiro*) *tare* for old warriors, aged gods, and foreigners.

*kashira* (headpiece): a great mane, the front bangs extending forward over the mask and the back trailing down almost to the floor. The red headpiece (*aka-gashira*) signifies a true demon, and the black headpiece (*kuro-gashira*) indicates either a mystical quality or a demonic nature in a human character. The white mane (*shiro-gashira*) symbolizes a malevolent or threatening spirit or demon.

The major, standard combinations of masks and wigs have now

been shown, but there is quite a bit of flexibility in the ways they are paired. In *Kuro-zuka*, for example, the old-woman-turned-demon is usually costumed in the *hannya* mask with a *katsura*, but the red, black, or white *kashira* headpiece may also be used, depending on the interpretation of the essential nature of her character. All characters in Noh are dressed with a limited number of masks, robes, and wigs, but this system of combinations allows an unlimited variety in costuming.

In the introduction to this book it was pointed out that Noh, perhaps the oldest form of living theater in the world, is alive today because of its very modern qualities. Naturally its beauty in performance and the universality of its profound themes are important, but as my examination of its systems and subsystems suggests, perhaps its most modern aspect is the way it is structured and assembled. Indeed, the construction seems to resemble modern industrial production systems, so one may form the impression that it is a totally rational process, but this is a mistake. The goals of modern-day production systematization, like a double-edged sword, are both rational (higher volume, lower cost, fewer steps) and nonrational (higher quality of product, longer lasting life). In the systematization of its own process of construction, Noh developed an approach similar to the modern approach, in that its goals are also both rational (higher levels of technique, simpler methods of production, fewer unnecessary movements) and nonrational (higher degree of *yūgen*, and greater aesthetic abstraction).

In the arts, extravagance of all kinds is permitted; indeed, the creation of a work of art is itself an incomparably nonrational operation. Moreover, drama in particular is devoted to the depiction of the absurdities of human nature, and of all forms of drama, the Noh, a theater of the mind, is outstanding in this respect. The construction of Noh, then, is a rational systematization of nonrational methods for the sake of creating a purely irrational, wholly other world.

## THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION

### Two Examples

This chapter, in an attempt to summarize and illustrate the aesthetic and structural principles of Noh discussed so far, presents the full texts of two plays, *Nonomiya* and *Shunkan*. *Nonomiya* is a Phantasmal Noh, taking place in fantasy time, in which the ghost of a spurned lover dances in recollection of lost love. Returning to the scene of her last meeting with her lover, she relives the past and begs to be released from the torments of delusion. *Shunkan* is a Phenomenal Noh, set in the present, which depicts the desolation of the exiled priest Shunkan, left alone on a remote island while others granted pardon depart in a boat. In reading the texts you will see that although both plays deal with the tragedy of abandonment, they are quite different—*Nonomiya*, elegant and lyrical, with poetry and dance, and *Shunkan*, religious and philosophical, the sadness unrelieved. I have repeatedly stated that Noh is a stage art that comes to life only in performance, but I hope that the two texts presented here will give you a clearer understanding of the structure of the plays and the tasks of each performer in the creation of Noh.

Stage directions in the following plays are given in parentheses, and commentaries on many aspects of the Noh theater are interspersed throughout the texts; also, to aid those interested, details concerning the type of performance of and the rhythmicality of sections of the plays are given at the far left.

## PHANTASMAL NOH

*Nonomiya*

Source: *The Tale of Genji*: Aoi and Sakaki chapters

Author: Zeami Motokiyo

Type of play: Woman Noh (Third category); Phantasmal Noh in two acts

Structure: Five-part structure based on the five-part division of *jo-ha-kyū*.

Characters:

MAE-JITE: The ghost of Rokujō no Miyasudokoro in the form of a young woman, wearing a *ko-omote* mask (*waka-onna*, or *fukai* can also be used) and the costume of a young female *mae-jite* (red *karaori* robe worn in *kinagashi* style over a gilt under kimono, with gilt red brocade wig band, double collar of white silk); she carries a brightly colored fan and an evergreen sprig.

NOCHI-JITE: The ghost of Rokujō no Miyasudokoro in her true form, wearing a *nochi-jite* young woman's costume (scarlet *ōkuchi*, gold-leaf decorated robe, and loose *chōken* outer robe) with the same mask, wig band, and under kimono as in Act I.

WAKI: A traveling priest, maskless, wearing *sun-boshi* cap, light blue silk collar, plain *noshime* kimono worn in *kinagashi* style, and a *mizu-goromo* outer robe, and carrying a fan and a Buddhist rosary.

Orchestra: Flute, shoulder drum, hip drum

*Ai-kyōgen*: A resident of the Sagano district, maskless, wearing *kyōgen kami-shimo* robes.

Stage property: A torii with low brushwood fences attached on either side (the torii is placed at center stage).

Scene: The shrine called Nonomiya in the district of Saga (now located in Ukyō-ku, Kyoto).

Season: The ninth month of the lunar calendar (late autumn).

Performance time: About one hour and forty minutes.

Structural diagram of the play:

	Stage of Composition ( <i>Dan</i> )	Name of Section ( <i>Shōdan</i> )	Type of Perfor- mance	Time	Quality	Place					
Act I—	Jo: I	- <i>nanori-bue</i>	instru- mental	natural flow of time	-real experi- ence	various places in Kyoto (day time)					
		- <i>nanori</i>	spoken								
		- <i>sashi</i>	sung								
		- <i>sage-uta</i>	sung								
	Intro- ductory Ha: II	- <i>shidai</i>	instru- mental		day dream	the ruins of Nono- miya at twilight					
		- <i>shidai</i>	sung								
		- <i>sashi</i>	sung								
		- <i>sage-uta</i>	sung								
	Develop- mental Ha: III	- <i>age-uta</i>	sung				day dream	the ruins of Nono- miya at twilight			
		- <i>mondō</i>	spoken								
		- <i>kake-ai</i>	sung								
		- <i>age-uta</i>	sung								
	Conclusory Ha: IV	- <i>unagashi</i>	spoken						day dream	the ruins of Nono- miya at twilight	
		- <i>serifu</i>									
		- <i>kuri</i>	sung								
		- <i>sashi</i>	sung								
		- <i>kuse</i>	sung								
		- <i>rongi</i>	sung								
Nakai (Inter- lude)	-I -II -III -IV	- <i>nanori</i>	spoken	natural flow of time	real -experi- ence						
		- <i>mondō</i>	spoken								
		- <i>ai-gatari</i>	spoken								
		- <i>mondō</i>	spoken								
	Act II— <i>Kyū</i> : V		- <i>machi-utai</i>	sung	condens- ed time		-dream	the ruins of Nono- miya at night			
			- <i>issei</i>	instru- mental							
			- <i>issei</i>	sung							
			- <i>kake-ai</i>	sung							
				- <i>age-uta</i>	sung				reversed time	-dream	the ruins of Nono- miya at night
				- <i>issei</i>	sung						
				- <i>jo no mai</i>	instru- mental						
				- <i>waka</i>	sung						
- <i>kake-ai</i>				sung							
- <i>ha no mai</i>				instru- mental							
- <i>kiri</i>				sung							



In practice, Noh ordinarily begins with a ritualistic tuning of the instruments called *shirabe*. Just before the performance is to begin, all performers (with the exception of the chorus members) gather together in the mirror room. The costumed *shite* looks at himself in the mirror, sits upon a stool and puts on the mask, and slowly transforms himself into the character. While this is going on, the musicians sit in a line behind the curtain, facing the stage. At a certain point, the musicians start: the flute begins intoning the *shirabe* music, and is joined in turn by the shoulder drum, hip drum, and stick drum, the effect slowly becoming that of a quartet. After playing briefly as an ensemble, the instruments drop out one by one, in reverse order, leaving only the flute to finish.

Although this *shirabe* seems to be the playing of an unrehearsed combination of sounds, it is in reality a very structured piece of predetermined melody, drum patterns, and length. Thus, even though it is considered to be a tuning up of the instruments (similar to the tuning up that occurs before the performance of a symphony orchestra), it should more properly be thought of as an overture, as the unseen beginning of a Noh performance.

When the *shirabe* is over, the musicians stand, and, as a stage assistant pulls aside the curtain on the upstage side, they file out, in the same order that they joined in the *shirabe*, and take their seats upon the stage. At about the same time, the chorus members enter the stage from the *kirido-guchi* at upstage left and take their seats at the *jiutai-za*, sitting in two lines of four. With almost no perceptible pause, the stage assistants carry out a small brushwood torii with small fences, and this is placed at downstage center.

After the assistants have checked to see that the positioning is correct and have left the stage (or, if no stage properties are used, immediately after the musicians have sat down), the flute player takes his cue and begins playing the entrance music (*nanori-bue*), and as he continues to play, the *waki* enters the stage and proceeds along the bridge to the naming place (*nanori-za*, or *jō-za*).

This Noh, then, begins very quietly with a flute solo, at the end of which the *waki* suddenly introduces himself and jolts the play into beginning.

*Nonomiya*  
(The Shrine in the Field)

ACT ONE: PART ONE (Jo)

(While the entrance music nanori-bue is being played, the WAKI enters, carrying a Buddhist rosary in hand, proceeds to the nanori-za, and faces forward.)

WAKI.  
nanori,  
spoken

I am a monk on pilgrimage throughout the many provinces. Recently, I have been in the capital visiting all the famous places and historical sites within the ancient city. Now that autumn is approaching its end, I long to see the fields of Saga, and so I have decided to visit those western outskirts.\* (Pause.)

Upon entering this forest and asking about this place, I was told that it is the site of the shrine known as Nonomiya. Therefore, even though I am but a casual traveler, I will stop and visit this place.

*The WAKI has entered to the music called nanori-bue, which is very freely structured and nonrhythmical. In other plays of this type, the usual pattern is for him to enter to the music shidai, and to begin by singing the shidai, and then reciting the nanori. These are followed by his singing of the michiyuki and tsuki-zerifu (travel song and arrival speech). The reason for the change in this play is that the SHITE will enter to the music shidai.*

*\*The asterisk indicates where the michiyuki and tsuki-zerifu would normally occur. Here, the actual distance between where the WAKI is and where he is going is very short, and so this section has been abbreviated into a slippage of time, in which a few seconds (the pause) become a few hours, and a shift of space, in which one part of Kyoto suddenly becomes some other part.*

WAKI. (Goes to center stage and faces torii.)

Sashi,  
sung,  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

Having come to this famous site,  
I see a rough torii and brushwood hedges  
Standing as they did in days gone by.

It is to me a sight most strange,  
And yet, having come so unexpectedly,  
How grateful I am to be able to worship here.

*Sage-uta,*  
sung,  
melodic,  
rhythmic

The holy hedge of Ise knows no distinction,  
The path of the sacred teachings has led me  
Straight to this ancient palace shrine,  
My soul made serene by the twilit hour,  
My soul made serene by the twilit hour.

(WAKI goes to waki-za and sits.)

*The surrounding scenery is described in the sashi and sage-uta, setting the stage for what follows. The WAKI comes to center stage and kneels with hands folded in prayer, rises again, and, during the sage-uta, proceeds to the waki-za and sits. It is now twilight, and he drifts off into a state of reverie, into which the shite slowly, quietly enters.*

## PART TWO (Introductory Ha)

*(While the entrance music shidai is being played, the SHITE enters, carrying a spray of evergreen in hand, proceeds to the jō-za, and turns around to face the pine painted at the back of the stage.)*

SHITE.  
*shidai,*  
melodic,  
rhythmic

Intoxicated by flowers at Nonomiya,  
Intoxicated by flowers at Nonomiya,  
How will it be when autumn is spent?

CHORUS.

Intoxicated by flowers at Nonomiya,  
How will it be when autumn is spent?

SHITE. (*Turns and faces the audience.*)

*sashi,*  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

Now that the lonely autumn comes to a close  
My tear-drenched sleeves are moistened more with  
dew,  
Tearing, each evening, to little pieces  
My heart, whose color, like his faithless heart,  
Turns to the autumn's thousand flowers  
And fades away. Oh, what misery!

sage-uta,  
melodic,  
rhythmic

Though known to none, each year on this day  
To this old place I am bound to return.

age-uta,  
melodic,  
rhythmic

Nonomiya lies  
In a forest where the cold autumn winds do blow,  
In a forest where the cold autumn winds do blow,  
Piercing deep within my jilted heart,  
Bringing back memories of the past,  
Thick as the remembering grasses stitched upon  
the robe  
No longer worn in this life, this vain, mortal life  
To which I must return; oh, what misery,  
To which I must return; oh, what misery!

*The MAE-JITE enters to the music shidai, a formal piece in two dan (segments) that is almost never abbreviated. The shidai sung by the SHITE sets the tone and states the theme of the play. She holds a fan in her right hand and an evergreen spray in her left, stands at the jō-za, and turns her back to the audience to sing the shidai. This action is seen by some to symbolize an act of homage to the god the pine is meant to represent. When she has finished singing, the CHORUS repeats the same words in a very low drone, during which she turns and faces front.*

*Having turned around, the SHITE sings the sashi, sage-uta, and age-uta, painting a stark picture of the loneliness of autumn at Nonomiya, and telling of the pain suffered from her heartbreak at having been left for another and having to keep returning to this world of grief. During this song, she remains quite still.*

### PART THREE (Developmental *Ha*)

WAKI.  
mondō,  
spoken

As I rest in the shade of this forest I call to mind  
the days of old, gradually putting my heart at  
peace; I contemplate, and as I do a lovely young  
woman suddenly appears out of nowhere.

(*Separately:*) Please tell me who you are.

SHITE.

You ask me who I am, and yet I would rather ask  
who it is who asks. In days gone by, each time  
the high priestess of the Grand Shrine of Ise was  
newly consecrated, she temporarily moved into this

absorb one another to become a single existence transcending self and other. This, too, we might call magic by willpower: the functions of mirror and mask merge as a spirit is incarnated and the self transformed by the magic of strengthened autosuggestion. When the time comes to go onstage, he fixes in his mind the stage as the mirror and himself as the image and then devotes himself completely to the magic of performance, which is meant to be shared with the audience and its group mind. This is how the Noh actor is destined to give his performance.

As we will discuss later, the basic structure of Noh is tripartite: it is divided into two acts, the *maeba* and the *nohiba*, with the withdrawal (*nakairi*) of the *shite* between the acts, during which a Kyōgen actor often appears on the stage. When the actor has finished the first act he retires to the mirror room, where he changes costume and mask and again transforms himself, this time into the character he is to play in the second act. This requires a leap of consciousness, as the change often involves a transformation into quite a contrasting character: from an old man into a dashing young god, for example, or from a beautiful young woman into the ghost of a warrior. This double transformation of the soul in order for one performer playing in both acts to portray two different characters is both an actual transformation occurring on stage and the magic of the structure of Noh. On rare occasions there are two main actors, one for each act, but true creation is not signified without the total transformation of self which is the basic intent of Noh.

Noh is always the creation of the performer and the audience, an act of invocation of spirits, the transmutation of drama into reality. Therefore, the performer is always a *someone* and around that central someone is created the universe called Noh. The performer is not there as part of an event; rather, the arrival of the performer through the magic of transformation is the dramatic event. In the apt wording of the French poet and dramatist Paul Claudel (in *Mes idées sur le théâtre*, "Le théâtre japonais," 1926), "*Le drame, c'est quelque chose qui arrive, le Nô, c'est quelqu'un qui arrive.*" (Drama is something that happens, Noh is someone that happens.) The magical quality of Noh is not only visual. The reverberations of the rhythms that hold the magic of Noh music and the feeling of rapture we might even call religious brought on by the unison singing of the chorus serve to

palace shrine of Nonomiya. Although this practice is no longer followed, year after year, in memory of times long past, on the seventh day of the ninth month, which falls today,

*kakaru,*  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

Though no one knows it, I purify the holy precinct  
And offer sacred rites; at such a time,  
That someone who does not even know where he is  
Should come along gives me cause for great fear.  
Leave here swiftly, swiftly, I pray.

*The WAKI waits until the SHITE has finished singing the age-uta before breaking into the mondō. The MAE-JITE is typical of that in Phantasmal Noh, in that she does not answer questions concerning herself clearly, and shows an inordinate knowledge of the place. She avoids revealing her own identity by saying, "But first I must ask who you are." And she tries to get rid of the WAKI by saying, "Your being here is sacrilegious, so please go away quickly." She is, of course, the ghost of Rokujō no Miyasudokoro, once the wife of an imperial prince and the mother of a high priestess of Ise, bound by her karma to return here each year to atone for her sins.*

WAKI.  
spoken

No, no, there should be no offense if the stranger  
who comes is numbered among those who have  
renounced the world and its pleasures. So, you  
come to this ancient site every year on this day to  
commemorate the past.

*kakaru,*  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

Whatever can the reason be?

SHITE.  
spoken

Genji, the Shining Prince, once paid a visit to  
this place on the seventh day of the ninth month,  
which is today. On that occasion he carried a small  
sprig of sacred evergreen, which he placed inside  
of the inner fence. At this, the young Miyasudokoro  
promptly recited this poem:

sung,  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

"By the sacred fence  
There was no holy cedar  
To guide you along;

What has misguided you, then,  
To break off this proffered branch?"

This was composed on this very day so long ago!

*From the beginning of the mondō until the beginning of the kake-ai, neither of the actors moves in a very large manner; they merely turn very slightly toward each other when they deliver their lines, facing front again when their lines are finished.*

WAKI.                      How interesting are your words, like autumn's  
kake-ai,                      leaves,  
melodic,                      And the hue of the branch of evergreen you carry  
nonrhythmic                Has not faded at all, though so many years have  
   passed.

SHITE.                      From days of old, the only thing that does not  
spoken                        change its color is the evergreen; in its everlasting  
   shade,

WAKI.                      Upon the forest lane in this late autumn twilight,  
kaku,                           
melodic,                       
nonrhythmic

SHITE.                      Faded leaves of maple fall,

WAKI.                      Upon the sparse heath, too,

CHORUS.                      Fields of withered grass,  
    (SHITE)                      Dried and barren, run wild around Nonomiya,  
age-uta,                      Dried and barren, run wild around Nonomiya,  
melodic,                      The ruins so dear in memory, where that  
rhythmic                      Seventh day of the ninth month of so long ago  
   Has come around again upon this day.  
   Sparse and insubstantial are the brushwood fences;  
   Plain is this temporary lodging place.  
   Even now, in the guardhouse, faintly  
   Burns a light. Could it be the consuming flame

Within my heart betraying its flicker to the world?  
 Oh, how sad is the site of this ancient palace  
 shrine,  
 Oh, how sad is the site of this ancient palace  
 shrine.

*During this kake-ai, the real character of the SHITE starts to blend with that of the woman in the song; at the same time, there is a certain merging of the consciousnesses of the SHITE and the WAKI. That is, not only does the SHITE say things about Miyasudokoro as though they were about herself, the WAKI says things that the SHITE should be saying. This process is quite common in this kind of play, and might be thought of as the WAKI's talking to himself while dreaming.*

*During the age-uta, the SHITE begins performing what seem to be real actions. She gets up, goes over and kneels in front of the torii, and makes an offering of the branch she is carrying. Then she stands and retires to the jō-za.*

*This section, the first entrance of the CHORUS since the beginning of the Noh, gives an indication of what is to follow.*

#### PART FOUR (Conclusory Ha)

WAKI.  
*unagashi-*  
*zerifu,*  
 spoken

I pray you, tell me the story of Miyasudokoro in  
 as much detail as you can.

*The unagashi-zerifu is a dan (structural segment) that consists of a single sentence. Its purpose is to encourage the SHITE to tell her own story in greater detail.*

CHORUS.  
*kuri,*  
*melodic,*  
 nonrhythmic

Now let me tell the story of this Miyasudokoro.  
 The Kiritsubo emperor's younger brother,  
 Honored as the former Crown Prince,  
 Joined himself to her in undying love,  
 And their fortune opened into full-bloom.

SHITE.  
*sashi,*  
*melodic*  
 nonrhythmic

Yet separation is the fate of all who meet:

CHORUS.

As there is nothing surprising in this world of  
 dreams,  
 Soon she was bereaved, a grieving widow,



SHITE. Too helpless to be left alone, frail as dew.

CHORUS. Thus, Prince Genji became intimate, visiting her secretly;

SHITE. But in time, for reasons unknown, his heart

CHORUS. Cooled off, and he ceased his nightly visits.

*kuse,*  
*melodic,*  
*rhythmic*

And yet that heartless one,  
Unable even then to renounce her,  
Journeyed to the distant Nonomiya,  
His heart weighted down,  
Sorely bent beneath heavy thought.  
The autumn flowers have all faded,  
And the crickets chirp in dying tones;  
Even the wind blowing through the pines  
Leaves lonesome echoes along the path,  
And fills the air with infinite sadness.  
The prince, arriving here,  
Paid his respects to the palace shrine  
And exchanged kind words with her. On the  
Leaves of their words did they leave dew drops  
In abundance in token of their heartfelt feelings.

SHITE. Later, at the Katsura purification rite,  
*age-ha*

CHORUS. White cotton strips were hung above the river waves,  
And she, like a floating, rootless water weed,  
Was borne on the crest of her own heart's tide  
As far as Ise's "Suzuka River—  
Whether its many-shoaled current washed my  
sleeves or not,  
Who would ever give a thought to me in that  
remote province?"  
Leaving these words behind, she left, following

Her daughter, mother and child now going against  
 custom,  
 Going together to the high priestess's Bamboo  
 Pavilion,  
 But, oh, to what bitter regret!

*The kuri-sashi-kuse usually appears in a play as one set, and constitutes the climax of the drama. Before the kuri begins, the SHITE goes to center stage and sits; she does not move until the kuse is over, as this is an i-guse (seated kuse). The beauty of this section of the play lies not in the grace of the dance movements but in the intense yūgen created by the actor as he quietly sits, concentrating with all his heart on portraying the intricate and delicate beauty of the dance without moving. This is an unusual form of acting based upon an aesthetic of paradox, as the normal method of portraying the beauty of this dance is by dancing it, as in a mai-guse (dance kuse). The idea of nondancing is rather akin to the Chinese concept of wu-wei (nonaction).*

*In the middle of the kuse, the SHITE sings a single line called the age-ha. A kuse with only one age-ha (which brings the dance to a kind of climax) is called an ichi-dan-guse, and one with two age-ha is called a ni-dan-guse. (one-part and two-part kuse); one with no age-ha is called a kata-guse (half kuse). In this ichi-dan-guse, Miyasudokoro recalls the bitterness of her past and, quoting from one of her own poems, hurls the story toward its end.*

CHORUS.  
*rongi,*  
*melodic,*  
*rhythmic*

Now, indeed, you who have told this tale  
 Seem to be no ordinary person.  
 I demand that you tell me your name.

SHITE.

Even if I tell my name,  
 What worth is there in that? If told,  
 It would leak out of this Shameful Wood  
 And be known. Thus, as one with no name,  
 I beg you to pray for this nonexistent one.

CHORUS.

How strange that you should say "nonexistent."  
 Then you must have, from this hapless life,

SHITE.

Left long ago, leaving nought but a name behind.

CHORUS.

The sacred precinct—*miyasudokoro*—

SHITE.

That is I; so she says, while

*With the rongi the story comes to an abrupt end, the WAKI begins to figure more prominently again, and the SHITE reveals her true identity. The SHITE actually intends to say: "I am no longer a being of this world; I am a transformation of the ghost of Miyasudokoro." Up until this point, time has been nonrealistic, subject only to the direction of the WAKI's reverie. Now that she has declared who she is, the WAKI begins to wake up and time begins to follow its natural course once again. As this occurs, she slowly fades away, her dream reality fading with his awakening consciousness. Real time for the WAKI had been stopped by the appearance of the SHITE.*

CHORUS.

*nakairi-ji,*  
melodic,  
rhythmic

The wind blows in the autumn dusk,  
And the rising moon, shining dimly  
Through the wood casts faint light on  
The rough torii, behind whose twin pillars  
She is hidden and disappears;  
She is hidden and seen no more.

*Su no Nakairi*

*The nakairi-ji serves as a bridge linking the rongi and the exit of the SHITE (nakairi). The SHITE slowly rises, looks around to the right, slowly takes a few steps downstage, lowers her mask slightly, which gives her a more subdued expression, and goes behind the pillars of the torii to hide. She exits silently, in keeping with the still atmosphere of Part One.*

INTERLUDE: I

A1.

*nanori*

I am someone who comes here very often, as I live quite nearby. Today, because I am going to the ruins of the shrine at Nonomiya in order to pray, I am hurrying to get there. (*While circuiting stage; stops at jō-za.*)

Although it is always bustling with worshipers, today it seems deserted and there are no people in sight.

INTERLUDE: II

*mondō*

Oh! Now that I take another look around, I can see that there is a priest here.



120. "Even if I tell my name, | What worth is there in that?"



121. "These flowery sleeves | Are turned up to the moon, | Tossed and turned in dance."

122. "So once more into the | Flower coach she steps | Through the gate. . ." ▸



Whence have you come and whither are you going, that you should rest here?

WAKI. I am a traveling priest with no place I can call home. Are you someone who lives in this vicinity?

AI. Yes, I am indeed a resident of this neighborhood.

WAKI. If that is true, then please come closer, as there is something I would like to ask you about.

AI. With all my heart. Now, what kind of thing did you wish to inquire about?

WAKI. It concerns something that I have never even thought about before. In the local traditions related to Nonomiya, there must be many fine points and details unknown to me. Would you be kind enough to relate for me the tale of Miyasudokoro?

AI. Well, I must say that no one has ever asked such a thing of me before. And even though it is true, however, that I live in this neighborhood, I am not very well informed in those matters. But, if you insist, I will tell you all I know of the tale.

#### INTERLUDE: III

*katari* Now, this place here, Nonomiya, was a temporary residence used by newly consecrated high priestesses of the Grand Shrine of Ise before they proceeded to their permanent residences there. That is to say, they stayed here at Nonomiya observing rites of purification and preparing themselves to undertake their position. After that, they underwent a public purification ceremony near the Katsura River before taking up residence at the Bamboo Pavilion in Ise.

Long ago, the virgin daughter of Miyasudokoro and the former Crown Prince was ordained high priestess and took up temporary residence here at Nonomiya. Miyasudokoro as well came to reside with her here at Nonomiya. The reason for that was that after the late Crown Prince's decease, Prince Genji had bestowed his favor on her and their vows were not trivial. But before long, Genji's affections turned to another, and Miyasudokoro knew the short-lived nature of feminine joy subject to the whims of a fickle heart. Thus, as there was no reason for her to stay in the capital, she determined to accompany her daughter, the newly appointed virgin priestess, to the Grand Shrine of Ise. It was in preparation for her daughter's departure that she came here to Nonomiya.

When Prince Genji heard this, he realized how deep was Miyasudokoro's suffering and took pity upon her, resolving to visit her just one more time before the departure, not wanting to be thought heartless. Thus, on the seventh day of the ninth month, Genji journeyed to this place, and, though Miyasudokoro was in no mood to see him, proceeded to approach the verandah. Genji then broke off a branch of the sacred *sakaki* tree and pushed it in under the blinds, saying:

"Guided by its unchanging color,  
I have trespassed within this holy place,  
Yet you are very cold."

At this, Miyasudokoro replied:

"By the sacred fence  
There was no holy cedar  
To guide you along;  
What has misguided you, then,  
To break off this proffered branch?"

separate the consciousness of the audience from reality. When a person's encounter with Noh is limited to the visual, he cannot really see the Noh. Only by a dimming of the consciousness of reality and the releasing of the self into the music is the mind's eye opened and the soul grasped; then the true Noh, hitherto invisible, comes alive, shining.



On hearing her poetic riposte, he composed in turn:

"So close to the young princess  
 Stands the sacred *sakaki* tree,  
 That drawn by its sweet-scented leaves  
 I have come to pluck a branch."

In this way did they pass the time, as though the days gone by were now returned; and when it came time for him to leave, they exchanged poems once more before Genji, his heart torn to pieces at the sight of her, sadly left in the quickly lightening dawn.

Thus, Miyasudokoro announced that she would accompany the virgin high priestess to Ise; before they left, they were granted a final audience with the emperor, but concerning Genji and the emperor, someone as lowly as I can not even aspire to know any of the particulars.

#### INTERLUDE: IV

*mondō*

Now that I have told you everything I have heard about this, may I be bold enough to inquire why a monk who has renounced the world is interested in such matters?

WAKI.

How courteously you have asked. Now, that our business may not remain undone, I will relate the tale to you.

Shortly before you came along, a solitary woman appeared, and she kindly told me the story of Miyasudokoro much as you have done. Then, intimating that she was Miyasudokoro, she disappeared behind the posts of this shrine's torii and vanished from sight.

AI. What a strange, incredible tale you have related. Now, without a doubt, we can be sure that Miyasudokoro appeared. If you wonder why, perhaps it is because the day that Genji came to see her, the seventh day of the ninth month, is today.

I have heard that Miyasudokoro was a lady of extremely deep and fearful feelings, so perhaps because she left her broken heart behind her here, or because she is attached to the memories of that time, she appeared now. Since that seems to be true, please stay awhile, and offer recitations from the holy sutras that her soul may find salvation.

WAKI. Certainly, as this strange thing has happened so recently, I will stay here long enough to recite the holy sutras and pray for the repose of her soul.

AI. If there is any way in which I can be of assistance, please feel free to say so.

WAKI. I will, indeed, require your services.

AI. With all my heart, I am at your service, sir. (*Exits.*)

## ACT TWO: PART FIVE (*Kyū*)

WAKI. Now half-spreading out,  
*machi-utai,* In the shadows of the wood, my dark robe of moss,  
 melodic, In the shadows of the wood, my robe on the moss,  
 rhythmic Of the very same color as the grassy mat,  
 Meditating, unfolding my thoughts all night long,  
 For the soul of the deceased, I offer my prayers,  
 For the soul of the deceased, I offer my prayers.

*The machi-utai comprises a shōdan that is often used as the opening piece in a two-act Phantasmal Noh. At the end of the machi-utai, the play enters the world of the WAKI's dreams.*

*(While the entrance music issei is being played, the SHITE enters. She proceeds to the first pine, where she faces the audience and sings.)*

SHITE.	To Nonomiya,
isei,	Autumn's colorful flowers
melodic,	Covering my coach,
nonrhythmic	I, too, to the distant past
	Have come reeling back again.

*The NOCHI-JITE always enters to a two-part instrumental piece, although the actual music varies. When the music issei is used, the musicians continue playing for a while even after the SHITE has begun singing.*

*In this play, the SHITE enters silently, walking with a special step meant to suggest that she is riding in a coach. She does not begin singing until she has reached the jō-za.*

WAKI.	How very strange. In the pale moonlight,
kakaru,	Faintly is heard the sound of an approaching coach,
melodic,	And I can see a coach of wicker, hung with blinds;
nonrhythmic	A most unexpected sight, indeed.
	Now, there can be no doubt
	That you must be the ghost of Miyasudokoro.
	But what is the meaning of this coach?

SHITE.	Being asked about this coach
	Reminds me of the past,
	Of the Kamo Festival and the battle of the coaches.
	The names of the riders unknown as the silver dew.

*Starting with this line, what follows constitutes the monologue of the ghostly spirit. That is to say, what follows, although it is a soliloquy that should properly be delivered by the SHITE, in this case is in the form of a conversation between the SHITE and the WAKI into which the CHORUS joins. Although a similar technique is sometimes used in Greek drama, with the CHORUS singing in place of the protagonist, here all three voices (SHITE, WAKI, and CHORUS) join together to produce the monologue. This is surely one of the unique characteristics of Noh.*

*In this section, the true form of the NOCHI-JITE appears as the spirit of a woman who suffers the torments of delusions caused by earthly attachments that force her to keep returning here to relive the past.*

- WAKI. Closely packed together stood
- SHITE. The coaches of various spectators, among them  
Lady Aoi's
- WAKI. Coach, her men driving away the mob  
And causing all in the way to move. Amid this,
- SHITE. I, in my miserable little coach, had no way to turn  
And was left standing there, while my men worked  
hard.
- WAKI. To this coach, at front, at back,
- SHITE. All together they rushed, and
- CHORUS. All of her men, taking hold of the shafts,  
*age-uta,* Pushed my coach back with those of the servants—  
melodic, An excursion coach, abandoned and helpless,  
rhythmic Making me realize the sadness of my plight.  
Yet as I ponder it, I see that nothing  
Can escape the balancing of karma, not I,  
Nor the weary little ox-drawn carriage  
That goes round and round for, oh, how long?  
From attachment and delusion free me, I pray,  
Free me from attachment and delusion, I pray.

*With the age-uta, the movements of the NOCHI-JITE begin. At first, describing the scene with her actions, she takes a few steps forward, raises her open fan to her left sleeve; then she backs off a bit and raises her hand to her face in the gesture of weeping. Making a full circuit of the stage, she goes to the jō-za and proceeds to center stage, where she faces the WAKI, in the gesture of prayer.*

- SHITE. In rememb'rance of the past,  
*issei,* These flowery sleeves  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic
- CHORUS. Arc turned up to the moon,  
Tossed and turned in dance.

(The SHITE performs a jo no mai that begins  
at upstage center and ends at the jō-za.)

*A song in the issei form is often performed before the major dance piece of a play. The daishō jo no mai in this play is intended to portray the sadness of Miyasudokoro's past. A solo dance for the SHITE, a jo no mai normally contains five sections (dan), although it is sometimes shortened to three.*

SHITE.  
*waka,*  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

At Nonomiya,  
The moon, too, seems to be drenched  
In memories.

CHORUS.  
sung,  
melodic  
*noru*

Her light, too, forlorn,  
Drips down to the forest's deepest dew.  
Drips down to the forest's deepest dew.

SHITE.  
*kake-ai,*  
*noru*

No place to call my own,  
As in the sad days of old;

CHORUS.

The garden apparition,

SHITE.

So unlike other places,

CHORUS.

Shows signs of temporariness

SHITE.

About the brushwood hedge.

CHORUS.

Brushing the dew off his robe,  
He came unto me, who, with  
Him the visitor,  
Into the far world of dreams  
Fast is fading at the ancient site—  
Waiting for whom?—while bell crickets chirp  
"Rin-rin" in clear tones,

And the wind blows and blows around  
Nonomiya all night long.

nonrhythmic      Painful, sweet mem'ry!

(*The SHITE dances a ha no mai.*)

*In this kake-ai, Miyasudokoro tells of how she left her heart at Nonomiya, and how, suffering the agonies of attachment, she returns to relive the days when Genji, the Shining Prince, came here to visit her. The CHORUS passage, during which she begins a dance that lasts to the segment's end, indicates the beginning of her enlightenment, the dawning of which is expressed in the ha no mai.*

*A short dance in only one section, the ha no mai in this play is used to portray the SHITE's joy at finding salvation.*

CHORUS.	This place, from of ancient days,
kiri,	Is dedicated to the sacred,
melodic,	Divine wind,
noru	The twin shrines of Ise.
	Entering and exiting 'neath the torii,
	She hovers 'twixt life and death.
	But the wholly divine will
	Never will approve this;
	So once more into the
	Flower coach she steps,
	Through the gate of the burning house,
	As if about to leave
	The burning house.

*The kiri of most plays usually ends with a line that is repeated exactly to bring the action to a final close. This play, however, deviates from that pattern. Also, most plays by Zeami end with an adjective; this play, however, in both versions, ends with a noun: kataku (burning house), or kataku no kado (gate of the burning house), a Buddhist image for this earthly world.*

PHENOMENAL NOH: *Shunkan*

Source: *Tales of the Heike* (Volume III), and *The Record of the Rise and Fall of the Minamoto and the Taira*

Author: Unknown, but attributed to Zeami Motokiyo

Type of Play: Present-time Noh (Fourth category; sometimes Second, in abbreviated form); Phenomenal Noh in one act (sometimes classified as an irregular two-act play, because the WAKI enters for the first scene and then exists.)

Structure: Five-part structure based on the five-part division of *jo-ha-kyū*

Characters:

SHITE: The Priest Shunkan, a Tendai Buddhist priest, born in 1142 into the Genji (Minamoto) family, exiled for conspiring against the Heike (Taira) ruler, Kiyomori. The SHITE wears the special *Shunkan* mask; peaked or flared priest's hood, occasionally with black headpiece; single collar of light blue; *noshime* under robe, plain or with small checks; plain or gauze-weave *mizu-goromo*; damask hip band; straw apron (optional). Carries fan and wooden bucket.

TSURE 1: Taire no Yasuyori, a lay priest and police magistrate who conspired with and was exiled with Shunkan. Maskless; wears peaked hood; single collar of light brown or light blue; russet *noshime* under kimono; plain or gauze-weave *mizu-goromo* outer cloak, tied with damask hip band; straw apron (optional). Carries fan, rosary.

TSURE 2: Fujiwara no Naritsune, governor of Tamba, leader of the conspiracy, was exiled with Shunkan and Yasuyori. No mask, wig, nor hat; wears single collar of light blue; plain *noshime* under kimono; plain or gauze-weave *mizu-goromo* outer cloak, tied with damask hip band; straw apron (optional). Carries fan.

WAKI: Envoy from the court of Taira no Kiyomori. Appears with neither mask nor wig. Wears samurai hat; single collar of navy

blue; *atsuita* under kimono; stiff, white *ōkuchi* trousers; top of *hitatare* suit as outer cloak, tied with damask hip band; letter of pardon tucked into kimono at breast. Carries fan, boat pole. Sometimes wears matching upper and lower parts of *suō*, instead of *hitatare* and *ōkuchi*.

Orchestra: Flute, shoulder drum, hip drum

*Ai-kyōgen*: A boatman. (This is an *ashirai-ai*, in which the *ai* takes part in the action of the play and interacts with other characters. No mask, wig, nor hat; wears checked under kimono; matching vest and trousers of *Kyōgen kami-shimo*.)

Stage Property: Boat with a mooring line

Scene: The Capital (Kyoto); Sulfur Isle (Iogashima), also called Devil's Isle (Kikaigashima), between southern Honshu and the Ryukyu Islands, in present-day Kagashima Prefecture

Season: The ninth month of the lunar calendar (late autumn)

Performance time: About ninety minutes

Structural Diagram of the Play: (See following page.)



This is present-time Phenomenal Noh of the emotional drama type, with certain special characteristics. One unique feature is the fact that the *shite* wears a mask, although he is a middle-aged man who actually lived, a person alive at the time the play takes place. There are only a few such Noh, including *Yoroboshi* (in which the *shite* is blind), and *Kantan* (in which the *shite* is a foreigner). There are a number of interpretations of the proper appearance of any given character, so the costuming varies with the school.

Another outstanding aspect of this play is the striking use of space, with the bridge, the stormy sea, and the main stage, the island, joined only by one thin mooring line. When that line is at last severed, Shunkan is left weeping on the shore. Dark loneliness envelops the stage and a deep sadness lingers as the play ends.



Stage of Composition ( <i>Dan</i> )	Name of Section ( <i>Shōdan</i> )	Type of Performance	Development	Time	Place
<i>Jo</i> : I	- <i>nanori-bue</i>	instrumental	WAKI enters.	Present time.	Capital
	- <i>nanori</i>	spoken			
	- <i>mondō</i>	spoken			
	-exit	silent	WAKI exits.		
Introductory <i>Ha</i> : II	- <i>shidai</i>	instrumental	TSURE enters.	Present time.	Devil's Isle
	- <i>shidai</i>	sung			
	- <i>sashi</i>	sung			
	- <i>sage-uta</i>	sung			
	- <i>age-uta</i>	sung			
Developmental <i>Ha</i> : III	- <i>issei</i>	instrumental	SHITE enters bridge	Overlaps with the time of the above <i>dan</i> .	Devil's Isle
	- <i>issei</i>	sung			
	- <i>sashi</i>	sung		Present time.	
	- <i>mondō</i>	spoken	SHITE enters main stage.		
	- <i>kake-ai</i>	sung		Bridge time slips back, contracts.	
	- <i>age-uta</i>	sung			
	-Boatman carries out boat prop and sets it on bridge.	silent			
Conclusory: <i>Ha</i> : IV	- <i>issei</i>	instrumental	NOCHI-WAKI onto bridge, boards boat.	Present time.	Bridge is sea, stage is island.
	- <i>issei</i>	sung			
	- <i>mondō</i>	spoken	NOCHI-WAKI to main stage.	Present time.	
	- <i>kudoki</i>	sung			
	- <i>kuse</i>	sung			
<i>Kyū</i> : V	- <i>kake-ai</i>	sung	NOCHI-WAKI and TSURE board boat,	Present time.	Bridge is sea, stage is island.
	- <i>age-uta</i>	sung	SHITE remains on main stage.		
	- <i>rongi</i>	sung			
	- <i>kiri</i> (finale)	sung			

*Shunkan*  
(The Priest Shunkan)

PART ONE: *Jō*

*(While the entrance music nanori-bue is being played, the WAKI enters and proceeds to the jō-za.)*

WAKI.  
*nanori,*  
*spoken*

I am a messenger in the service of the Prime Minister. In order to increase the efficacy of official state prayers for the safe delivery of Her Imperial Majesty, a special general amnesty has been proclaimed, a pardon extending to those in exile throughout the land. Among whom, of the exiles on Devil's Isle, Major General Naritsune, Governor of Tamba, and Taira no Yasuyori, magistrate and lay priest are pardoned. As I have been commanded to bear these tidings, to Devil's Isle I must now make haste.

*The WAKI (messenger) and AI-KYŌGEN (boatman) enter and proceed to the jō-za, where the WAKI delivers the self-introductory nanori. Tucked into the fold of his kimono across his chest is the actual document of amnesty. The scene is some unspecified location in Kyoto.*

WAKI.  
*mondō*

Holla! Is there anyone about?

AI.

At your service, sir.

WAKI.

I have been commanded to bear a message of pardon to those exiled on Devil's Isle. Equip your ship and prepare to take me there.

AI.

As you say, sir.

*After the nanori, the WAKI proceeds to center stage and converses with the AI-KYŌGEN, after which they exit silently.*

### THREE STAGES OF BEAUTY

#### Aesthetic Fulfillment in Noh

The beauty of Noh is often thought of as the beauty of the masks and the costumes, which are frequently exhibited in museums and galleries for their value as works of art. Of course they are exquisitely lovely, but the unique beauty of each mask or robe is realized only when it is given life on the body of the performer, its mission fulfilled as it moves about the stage. Even this is a superficial beauty, however, that delights and satisfies only the visual sense. Here we do not find the ultimate beauty of Noh but rather the starting point. This visual beauty can serve as a catalyst to move the audience to feel and respond to what is happening inside the gorgeously adorned character, ultimately achieving an aesthetic experience that entices one into an indescribable state. This is beauty of a high order that exists only in internal drama. Noh comes to a fruition or an aesthetic fulfillment in stages, relying first on what Zeami called *hana*, the attraction (or beauty) of the performer's flower (or art), moving next to the beauty of *yūgen*, a dark, mysterious, and sublime elegance, and arriving finally at *rōjaku*, the beauty found in the lonely sadness of the old.

#### *Hana* (APPARENT BEAUTY)

Kan'ami and his son Zeami refined and transformed the Noh of their times from a form of entertainment performed at religious



*age-uta,*  
melodic,  
rhythmic

Here, at last,  
The gods of the three Kumano shrines do dwell,  
The gods of the three Kumano shrines do dwell;  
Our single hempen garments, wet with waves,  
Must, as they are, serve as white pilgrims' robes.  
White sand we throw, in place of rice;  
White flowers we bear, in place of sacred staffs,  
To carry out the purification rites:  
Cleansed do we near the gods in pilgrimage,  
Cleansed do we near the gods in pilgrimage.

*During this age-uta, the TSURE proceed to the jiutai-mae, where they sit.*

### PART THREE: Developmental *Ha*

*(While the entrance music issei is being played, the SHITE enters and stops at the first pine, where he turns toward the audience and sings.)*

SHITE.

*issei,*  
dynamic  
nonrhythmic

While still of this world, I have entered hell,  
To become the keeper of this Devil's Isle,

CHORUS.

To become the effect of my karma,  
From out of the darkness have I come;

SHITE.

*sashi,*  
dynamic,  
nonrhythmic

Only to have entered another dark path.  
The jade hare of the moon sleeps by day  
In the land of the cloud mothers;  
The golden cock of the sun roosts by night  
In branches barren of leaves.  
A winter cicada hugs a withered tree  
And sings its song of death,  
Never turning its head.  
And I, Shunkan, sense that such, too,  
is my own fate.

*The SHITE enters to the music issei, carrying a wooden bucket in his right hand. He stops on the bridge at the first pine, remains standing, faces the audience, and sings. During the issei, he lowers the mask in order to express his sadness.*

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*The sashi, until it is finished, shows a scene from the everyday life of Shunkan. In fact, it employs a kind of flashback technique, in that it portrays the same period of time as that shown in the preceding scene of the two TSURE, and thus, in terms of real time, overlaps with Part One. While the SHITE sings the sashi, he enters the main stage and stands at the jō-za.*

YASUYORI. Is that you, Shunkan, who approaches? For what reason have you come this far?  
mondō,  
spoken

SHITE. How quick you are to reproach me. I have come out to meet you on your way home, bringing with me some wine.

YASUYORI. Did you say wine? On this tiny isle, no bigger than a bamboo leaf? When I come over to see it, why do I see only water?

SHITE. It is indeed as you say, but as that which we call wine was originally water, then this must be holy wine fit to offer the gods.

*In the mondō, the SHITE and the two TSURE come together in the same time and space. From this point until the end of Part Two, time passes in a natural, ordinary flow.*

*When SHUNKAN speaks of wine, he refers to the water he is carrying in the wooden bucket in his right hand. YASUYORI, doubtful, goes over to look into the bucket, and, seeing only water, returns to his original position.*

NAR. & YAS. Indeed, there is reason in what you say.  
kake-ai,  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

SHITE. And time has entered the ninth day.

NAR. & YAS. The place is a mountain path,

SHITE. And this water is from the valley.

SH., NAR., P'eng-tzu,  
& YAS. Knowing the secret of its power,

Quaffed the waters of a deep mountain stream  
And lived for more than seven hundred years.

## CHORUS.

*age-uta,*  
*melodic,*  
*rhythmic*

After it is drunk,  
A medicine it truly is, this chrysanthemum water,  
A medicine it truly is, this chrysanthemum water.  
Its secret remains unknown,  
Our white garments, drenched with the dew  
Of the chrysanthemums along the mountain path,  
Though taking little time to dry,  
Seem to us to take a thousand years.  
Our exile in this place—oh, how long, how long?  
The passing of spring, the decline of summer,  
The end of autumn, the beginning of winter—  
These we know only by the changing color of plants.  
Alas! how sorely we long for the past!  
Every memory reminds us of the capital  
And when we used to live there:  
Of Hosshō-ji and Hōjō-ji,  
Temples recalling Indra's palace,  
Recalling our pleasures, like the blossoms of spring.  
Yet now into what has that time been changed?  
Like the five signs of an angel's decay,  
Our lives have faded like the autumn colors,  
Our cups are filled with fallen leaves,  
Our wine is the water of mountain streams,  
Flowing in the river of our tears,  
Flotsam upon the water's surface are we,  
The very moment we remember anything,  
And now, especially, as our grief knows no bounds.

*During the kake-ai, the two TSURE sit, facing stage right. The SHITE kneels, places the bucket on the stage, and sits at center stage, facing forward.*

*During the age-uta, the SHITE takes the bucket, stands, and goes to the jō-za, where he lowers his head to look down at the withered autumn plants, facing forward. When the CHORUS sings of memories, the SHITE and the two TSURE face one another; the SHITE, carrying his fan in his right hand, looks up, and at the same time comes slightly forward. Then he uses his fan in order to scoop up water from the stream, after which he sits and looks far off into the distance, then lowers his mask*

*in sorrow. Then standing, he proceeds to daishō-mae, where he throws down his fan and places his bucket upon the stage (they are then picked up by one of the stage assistants).*

PART FOUR: Conclusory *Ha*

*(While the entrance music issei is being played, the MESSENGER enters the stage with the AI-KYŌGEN; they stop at the first pine, where the MESSENGER sings the issei.)*

MESSENGER.      A fast-sailing ship,  
                               Driven by a favorable wind,  
*issei,*                    Increasingly uplifts  
                               The sailors' spirits.  
*dynamic,*  
*nonrhythmic*

AI.                     Though others are in good cheer, I, for one, am  
                               frightened of Devil's Isle.  
*spoken*

*tsuki-zerifu,*        We have now arrived, sir; this is Devil's Isle.  
                               Perhaps we should inquire concerning the exiles  
                               here.  
*spoken*

MESSENGER.        You have reasoned well.

*First the AI carries out the ship prop and places it on the bridge near the first pine. Carrying a pole with which to propel the ship, he steps within the prop and is now aboard ship. While the issei is played, the WAKI (MESSENGER) enters and boards the center of the ship. From there, he faces the audience and sings the issei. This scene shows the WAKI and AI while on their journey from Kyoto to Devil's Isle; as this was actually a journey of twenty or thirty days, the time here is greatly contracted or condensed into a few minutes. At the same time, this scene is taking place simultaneously with a scene in the ordinary life of the TSURE and of the SHITE, and thus overlaps Parts Two and Three. In terms of space, as soon as the MESSENGER and AI enter, the bridge becomes the ocean and the main stage becomes Devil's Isle; this convention is retained throughout the rest of the play.*

*After the tsuki-zerifu (arrival speech), the MESSENGER enters the main stage, and, carrying the letter of pardon in his right hand, he proceeds to downstage right, where he begins the mondō. The SHITE and the MESSENGER move close together and kneel down. The SHITE receives the letter, faces YASUYORI, and hands it to him, at which, YASUYORI, also kneeling upon the stage, opens the letter, and reads it aloud.*



MESSINGER. (*Separately.*)

mondō,  
spoken

Where are those who were exiled to this island?  
I have come from the capital carrying a letter of  
amnesty. Inspect it quickly, please.

SHITE.

Ah, how filled with gratitude we are. Yasuyori,  
look at it immediately.

YASUYORI.

Why, what is this? (*Reading.*) "In connection with  
the state prayers for the safe delivery of Her Impe-  
rial Majesty, a special amnesty is extended to all  
exiles throughout the land. Of those banished to  
Devil's Isle, Major General Naritsune, Governor of  
Tamba, and Taira no Yasuyori, magistrate and  
lay priest, those two are hereby pardoned."

SHITE.

Why have you forgotten to read Shunkan's name?

YASUYORI.

If only your name were here. See what is written  
on this letter of pardon for yourself.

SHITE.

Surely, this must be some scribe's error.

MESSINGER.

No; the fact is that in the capital, it was commanded  
that the message of pardon be proclaimed to both  
Yasuyori and Naritsune, but that to Shunkan it  
should be announced that he must remain on this  
island.

SHITE.

age-uta,  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

How can that be so?  
The crime was one and the same crime;  
and the place of exile, one and the same.  
So also should this special general amnesty be.  
Why should I alone be refused the net of salvation  
and be cast down into a bottomless abyss?

*Beginning with the mondō, the MESSINGER, the SHITE, and the two TSURE all  
come together in the same time and space. On realizing that SHUNKAN's name is not  
on the letter, the SHITE and YASUYORI look it over very carefully, and YASUYORI*



123. "While still of this world, I have entered hell."





125. "He takes up the scroll that he had erewhile read, | Unrolls and opens it to the same place, reading it once again and yet again."

124. "I place my trust in you and dare to hope."

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*passes the letter to SHUNKAN and returns to his own seat. SHUNKAN reads the letter, facing the MESSENGER, folds it in two, and makes the weeping gesture.*

SHITE.  
*kudoki,*  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

Until now have not we three together  
Dwelt here in this dreadful place?  
Now, on this wild, rocky islet,  
I alone am to remain. Separated  
Like a weed the fisherman has cast aside,  
Flotsam floating hopelessly on the waves.  
How can such wretchedness be endured?  
Grief affords no pleasure. The plover  
On the strand does nought but cry;  
Just such a spectacle do I make.

*(The SHITE weeps.)*

CHORUS.  
*kuse,*  
melodic,  
rhythmic

Struck by the spirit of the times,  
even the flowers shed bitter tears;  
Feeling resentment at being parted,  
even the birds are moved to grief.  
From ancient days was not this isle  
called Devil's Isle?  
It is a place where demons dwell,  
a hell during this life;  
Yet even the foulest fiend in hell  
shall know my grief.  
Heaven and earth, even all gods and demons  
shall be moved by the depths of human sorrow.  
Even the birds and the beasts  
of this island cry,  
Wailing together with me in my anguish.

SHITE.

Hoping against all possibility,

CHORUS.

He takes up the scroll  
that he had erewhile read,  
Unrolls and opens it to the same place,  
reading it once again and yet again;  
Yet though he looks here and there  
again and again,

No other names are written down  
 but Yasunori's and Naritsune's.  
 Then, thinking it might be written  
 on the outer covering,  
 He picks that up and turns it  
 over and over,  
 But finds that neither "priest" nor "Shunkan"  
 Is anywhere to be found within the message.  
 "Is this a dream? Indeed,  
 If this be dreaming,  
 Awake, awake from this fantasy!"  
 —pounding the earth, thus he cries.  
 Shunkan—what a sight! To see it  
 fills one's heart with grief.

*The SHITE folds up the letter and holds it in his right hand, while the MESSENGER goes before the stage assistants' seats and sits down.*

*The first half of this kuse is an i-guse (seated kuse), in which the SHITE remains seated at center stage, unmoving. At the line "Wailing together with me in my anguish" the SHITE makes the gesture of weeping. After shedding these tears, the SHITE takes the letter once more, reading it for his name. When he cannot find it, he folds the letter in half and, holding it in his left hand, pounds (silently) on the stage twice with his right hand. Then, standing, he faces the WAKI and, striking his knees, throws away the letter and joins his hands together in a pleading gesture. He then proceeds to daishō-mac, where he sits and weeps. YASUYORI goes to pick up the letter, and, placing it in the fold of his kimono at his chest, he returns to his seat.*

### Part Five: *Kyū*

MESSENGER.

*kake-ai,*  
 dynamic,  
 nonrhythmic

It is not possible to waste any more time.  
 Naritsune! Yasuyori! You are both ordered  
 To get aboard the ship immediately!

NAR. & YAS.

Since we cannot stay here like this forever,  
 We cast aside all thought of another's grief  
 And prepare, both of us, to board the ship.

SHITE.  
 spoken

This priest, as well, prepares to board the ship,  
 and clings fast to Yasuyori's sleeve.

festivals based on an encounter between god and man into a stage art with dramatic elements woven around the main characters of gods, men, women, lunatics, and demons, based on an encounter between man and man, that is, between performer and audience. In order to create an art out of this dramatic communication between human beings, they needed to establish a central concept of beauty, and for this Zeami chose to use the word *hana*, flower or blossom. In the Middle Ages *hana* was taken as the aesthetic ideal for *renga*, linked verse, and the term was widely used, expressing the artistic sensibilities of the period, but Zeami seized on the concept for the beauty of Noh and sought greater depth in it, thereby creating a unique aesthetic theory for Noh. In his study and thought on *hana* he brings to light a causal relationship between the inner, expressive beauty of the performer and what is perceived outwardly as visual beauty by the audience; he includes in the idea of *hana* what is novel or interesting; and yet we see none of the sentimental meaning, derived from the Buddhist concept of *mujōkan*, the impermanence and transience of all things, which sees the blossom as beautiful *because* it dies. Zeami's theory is not an expression of a facile aesthetic consciousness that simplistically likens beauty to a flower; rather, it is a diligent investigation of the true nature of beauty.

In discussing performance techniques in the *Kadensho* (Instructions on the Posture of the Flower), a treatise on the aesthetics of *hana*, he answers the question, "What is *hana*?" thus: "After you master the secrets of all things and exhaust the possibilities of every device, the *hana* that never vanishes still remains," while at the same time declaring that "*Hana* itself is a thing of no special significance." The vagueness of this concept, which seems at first like a Zen riddle, can turn into a maze for scholars who seek simplistic aesthetic explanations of *hana* or who strain to make the statements consistent: it cannot be comprehended without recognizing a shift in thinking. Essentially, Zeami is saying that for expression, acting to one's physical limits surpasses conceptual beauty, and that is *hana*. There is no particular contradiction in this.

The importance of the concept of *hana* to Zeami is shown by its frequent use in the titles of his works, for example, *Kakyō* (The Flower Mirror), *Shikadō* (The Way to the Ultimate Flower), and *Kyakuraika* (The Coming and Going of Flower), but gradually this concept merged

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*The AI extends the ship's rope to the jō-za, as though unmooring the ship. The MESSENGER gets aboard and begins the kake-ai. In response, the two TSURE get up and go over to the bridge. Naritsune boards the ship, and as Yasuyori goes to embark, SHUNKAN grabs his sleeve and stops him.*

MESSENGER.

sung,  
dynamic,  
nonrhythmic

"The priest shall not enter the boat!"  
such is the rough order in the message.

SHITE.

spoken

Ah, have pity upon me! If there is truly a difference between public duty and private affairs, take me, at least, even to the opposite shore. For mercy's sake, I beg you, let me aboard.

MESSENGER.

sung,  
dynamic,  
nonrhythmic

The boatman, showing no mercy, strikes with an uplifted oar.

SHITE.

sung,  
melodic,  
nonrhythmic

Wretched though this life may be, leave it to me.  
Shunkan stands and comes back,  
Grasps the mooring rope and pulls,  
Trying to stop the departing ship.

MESSENGER.

dynamic,  
nonrhythmic

The boatman cuts the rope, casts off,  
And pushes the ship out into deep water.

SHITE.

melodic

Helpless amid the waves, tossed to and fro,  
I clasp my hands together and call out to the ship.

MESSENGER.

dynamic

Though you call out to this ship,  
you will never be allowed aboard.

*Throughout the above, SHUNKAN faces toward the curtain. The WAKI rests an oar on his right shoulder; YASUYORI enters the ship. The SHITE lowers his mask and returns to the center of the stage; he looks at the ship, goes to the jō-za, and, taking the mooring rope in both hands, pulls the boat.*

*The WAKI cuts the rope, the SHITE falls and then sits on the stage. The SHITE stands, faces the ship, and brings his hands together in a gesture of prayer.*

SHITE. Now beyond all reach, Shunkan, (Weeps.)  
melodic

CHORUS. Throwing himself upon the beach,  
*age-uta,* Is stricken like Lady Sayo of Matsura—  
melodic, Who waved her scarf until she turned to stone,  
rhythmic Whose grief was no more plentiful than his,  
Whose cries were no more pitiful than his—  
And sits, weeping.

MESS., NAR.  
& YAS. What an unhappy event! But our hearts are not  
*rongi,* cold.  
melodic, We will plead unceasingly on your behalf.  
rhythmic And soon you will surely be recalled as well.  
Do not lose heart; wait patiently.

SHITE. "Wait patiently for my recall to the capital, they  
cry,  
Yet like their shouting voices, now faint,  
Hope, too, is dim; but having checked his sobs,  
He listens intently from beneath the pines.

*From the rongi, the WAKI and two TSURE exist only on the sea in the boat, and thus their presence is felt only through their chanting. From the rongi to the kiri, the boat should, realistically, be moving farther and farther away; but a shrinkage of space is used here, keeping the boat seemingly stationary as it floats away. While speaking with those aboard the quickly departing ship, the SHITE cups his right hand to his ear.*

MESS., NAR.,  
& YAS. Can you hear us over the darkening waves?  
With every word, every phrase, for Shunkan,

SHITE. Will you together petition our lord without cease?



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MESS., NAR.,

& YAS.

With all our hearts.

Your return to the capital is assured.

SHITE.

Can this be true?

*(The SHITE stands and faces the ship.)*

MESS., NAR.,

& YAS.

We promise it, we swear!

SHITE.

I place my trust in you and dare to hope.

CHORUS.

"Wait, wait with hope," they cry,

Yet as the ship sails further out to sea

The voices and figures grow fainter,

The voices fade away; both men and ship are gone,

Vanished and no more to be seen; all traces are

Vanished and no more to be seen.

*During this the SHITE stands in place while the WAKI, the TSURE, and the AI all exit to the line "The voices and figures grow fainter." The SHITE continues to face the curtain and weeps. This sort of weeping ending is called shiori-dome.*

## APPENDICES



✦ 1 ✦

ZEAMI

**The Man Who Linked Noh to the Future**

In Europe, theater has been an important part of culture from the earliest days, but in Japan there existed only a form of mime centered on religious ritual that derived from agricultural festivals scattered through out the provinces. There is no evidence that such rural festival entertainment was linked to the literary forms of the day, either poetry (*waka*) or tale recitation (*katari*), and thus we could say that theater per se in Japan began with the advent of Noh, which incorporated the concept of portraying dramatic human actions. The early form of Noh was a form of popular entertainment called *sarugaku*, and the man who led it into a world of elegance, refined it into a dramatic art, and fixed it as an expression of the mind of the Japanese was called Zeami.

Zeami, the professional name of Kanze (né Yūzaki) Saburō Motokiyo (1363–1443), was a Noh actor and composer, as well as an outstanding dramatic theorist. We of the present era are the fortunate heirs of his thoughts and works, which speak to us even today with a freshness that transcends the barrier of time.

We can understand something of his character by examining the Noh he composed. Going against the mainstream of strong plays that were based on mimicry and realistic acting, he created the gentler, visionary Noh based on song and dance; he began a revolutionary effort to alter the character of the art, which culminated in a wonderful dramatic vehicle transcending the bounds of time and space.

Today, we consider this visionary form important as an embodiment of Noh's uniqueness in the world of theater, and we see it quite clearly in many of Zeami's plays, for example, as in such *Waki Noh* as *Takasago*, *Yumi Yawata*, and *Yōrō*; *Warrior Noh* as *Tadanori*, *Kiyotsune*, and *Atsumori*; *Women Noh* as *Izutsu*, *Hanjo*, and *Higaki*; *Derangement Noh* as *Kinuta*, *Koi no Omoni*, and *Aoi no Ue*; and *Ending Noh* as *Tōru*, *Suma Genji*, and *Nomori*. Indeed, more than two thirds of the plays known to have been written by Zeami are visionary (Phantasmal) Noh. The general image of Noh as plays about ghosts or mad characters is evidence of the extent to which Zeami's view of Noh influences our idea of it even today.

Although his plays have been known to audiences for centuries, it was only in 1909, with the publication of his *Fūshi Kaden*, that the modern discovery of Zeami as an author of theoretical and critical works began. This treatise, as well as a number of other works subsequently released, had been kept secret in families of Noh actors for generations. When first published, the works attracted the interest and scrutiny of only a small group of scholars and enjoyed little general understanding. Indeed, foreign scholars and dramatists were the first to point out the modern dramatic elements of Noh, while many contemporary Japanese continued to dismiss it as mere old-fashioned song and dance. In his theoretical writings, Zeami discusses the relationship of audience to actor only in the medium of Noh, but his wide-ranging and profound thinking on drama has come to be taken as scripture of significance for theater in general. His theories are both orthodox and rich in messages for modern drama, and one wonders why Japanese dramatists were not interested in these outstanding works until they had been translated and published overseas.

Zeami lived during a time of great social and political upheaval. The critic Hideo Kobayashi has described it as "a healthy age when people had not the slightest doubt about the impermanence of the present and the eternity of faith." The Buddhist view of all things of this world as transient dominated the intellectual life of the time and appears clearly in Zeami's plays and critical works. This was the age when the elegant, delicate culture of the court, until then enjoyed only by a small number of aristocrats clustered in the ancient capital of Kyoto, was beginning to spread to the populace, each class of

which gave it a special coloration. Zeami brought Noh to flower under these conditions, elevating it more to the position of a great art.

Zeami and his father Kan'ami came to the attention of the aesthete shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, when Zeami was just a boy. Yoshimitsu was impressed by Kan'ami's troupe and, drawn to the skill and youthful beauty of the boy, he became the troupe's patron. With the favor and support of the shogun as well as training from his father, Zeami developed into an outstanding Noh actor and director, an artist who was familiar with the refined ways of the court, and at the same time a practical man of the theater. During the decades of Yoshimitsu's patronage, Zeami acted, composed many superb Noh plays, and also managed to do a considerable amount of theoretical writing. His fortunes as an actor began to decline, however, with the death of the shogun in 1408, when Zeami was forty-five years old, and the passion and energy that he had devoted to performance and production were redirected toward his writing. Thus he was able to give full play to his superior talents as a theorist. When, in his later years, he was exiled to the island of Sado off the northwestern coast of Japan, he wasted no time in bitter reflection but rather, like a phoenix, arose to devote himself anew to his art, this time in his writings. He lived to the full until his death at the age of eighty-one.

The enduring ideals and principles of Zeami, who was in every sense a superstar, are what allow us to enjoy Noh in the present and consider where it will go in the future. The chronology following shows the dates of his treatises and the major known events of his life.

DATE	EVENT OR TITLE OF WORK
1363	Born in central Japan, named Oniyasha.
1368	Ashikaga Yoshimitsu ascends to shogunate at the age of eleven.
1372	Oniyasha's first recorded performance, during a week of Noh given by his father Kan'ami at the temple Daigo-ji, in Kyoto. (Aged nine.)
1374	At a performance at Imagumano Shrine in Kyoto, Kan'ami and Zeami are seen by the young shogun Yoshimitsu, who becomes patron.

- 1375 Oniyasha given childhood name Fujiwaka-maru in an audience with Nijō no Yoshimoto, a scholar, poet, and counsellor to the shogun.
- 1378 Fujiwaka views the Gion Festival in Kyoto with shogun. Yoshimitsu moves to a new residence, the lush "Flower Palace."
- 1384 Death of Zeami's father, Kan'ami.
- 1391 Meitoku uprising. The following year the northern and southern courts are reunited.
- 1397 Completion of new villa for shogun, the Golden Pavilion in northwest Kyoto.
- 1402 The name "Zea" appears for the first time, in a signature in the *Fūshi Kaden*, Chapter 5.
- 1408 Death of the shogun Yoshimitsu. The new shogun, Yoshimochi, favors Dōami of the Ōmi Sarugaku troupe, and Zeami's fortunes begin to decline.
- 1413 Completion of *Fūshi Kaden* (Instructions on the Posture of the Flower), abbreviated to *Kadensho*. In this first major theoretical work, he says he sets down the teachings of his father, Kan'ami. (Aged 56.)
- 1418 Completion of *Kashū* (Learning of the Flower), a treatise on aesthetics believed to be a preliminary version of *Kakyō*, and the chapter "On *Jo-ha-kyū* in Noh," from *Kashū no Uchi no Nukigaki* (Excerpt from Learning of the Flower).
- 1419 Completion of a treatise on singing, *Ongyoku Kowadashi Kuden* (Instructions on Vocalization in Musical Pieces).
- 1420 Completes a treatise on aesthetics and training, *Shikadō* (The Way to the Ultimate Flower).
- 1421 Completes treatise on performance technique, *Ni-kyoku San-tai Hitogata-zu* (The Two Arts and Three Body Types, with Illustrations).
- 1423 Transmits treatise on the playwriting of Noh called *Sandō* (The Three Ways) to his second son, Motoyoshi.
- 1424 Completes *Kakyō* (The Flower Mirror), a major treatise on aesthetics, performance techniques, and production.
- 1428 Transmits to Komparu Ujinobu (Zenchiku), the husband of his daughter, a treatise on artistic levels, *Rikugi* (Six

- Virtues) and a general work, *Shūgyoku Tokuka* (Finding the Jewel, Acquiring the Flower).  
 Death of Yoshimochi. Shōchō Insurrection, a major peasant uprising in home provinces.
- 1429 Yoshinori becomes shogun. Performance of Noh by Zeami and his sons at Sento Palace (forbidden by shogun).
- 1430 Completes treatise on responsibilities of participants entitled *Shūdōsho* (Learning the Way). Completion of *Zeshi Rokujū-igo Sarugaku Dangi*, often called simply *Sarugaku Dangi* (Talks on Sarugaku by Zeami After Age Sixty). Zeami's instructions to his first son, Motomasa, transcribed by his second son, Motoyoshi.
- 1432 Completion of *Museki Isshi* (A Note on Past Dreams), a piece in which he mourns the early death of his son Motomasa, in whom he had placed his hopes.
- 1433 Completion of a treatise on performance techniques, *Kyakuraika* (The Coming and Going of Flower), his major late work.
- 1434 Zeami is exiled to the island of Sado, at age 72.
- 1436 Completes a collection of chanted songs, *Kintōsho* (Compositions at the Island of Gold [Sado]).
- 1441 Shogun Yoshinori assassinated while watching Noh. Zeami, pardoned sometime thereafter, returns to capital (Kyoto).
- 1443 Zeami dies at age of 81.

In addition to the treatises included in the chart above, Zeami wrote a number that cannot be dated precisely: *Fushi-zuke Shidai* (The process of Putting Melody to Text), a treatise on composition; *Fukyokushū* (Collection on Vocalization), a treatise on singing; *Yūgaku Shūdō Fūken* (Pointers on Professional Training), a treatise on training; *Go-i* (The Five Levels), a treatise on levels of the acting art; *Kyū-i* (The Nine Levels), a treatise on levels of attainment; *Go-on* or *Go-in* (Five Melodies or Sounds), a treatise on musical method; and *Go-in Kyoku Jojo* (Notes on the Five Melodies).

The *Fūshi Kaden* (or *Kadensho*), the best-known of Zeami's theoretical works, consists of the following chapters:

- (1) *Nenrai Keiko Jojo* (Concerning Age and Training), a discussion



with that of *yūgen*, and eventually he went on to transfer his ideal of beauty from *hana* to the more complex and profound *yūgen*. The scholar Tadahiko Kitagawa, in his book *Zeami*, identifies this phenomenon and analyzes it admirably, saying that we must recognize that in the mind of Zeami, who crowned the titles of his treatises on aesthetics with the character for *hana* while he tried to express the beauty of Noh with the word *yūgen*, there was a great change, and perhaps we can see this in his works in the shift from realistic pieces to those based on the classics, from external to internal, from Noh aimed at an audience to Noh directed at himself. And this is connected to Zeami's change of direction from dramatic phenomenal pieces (*genzai noh*) to the phantasmal pieces (*mugen noh*) of a dreamworld.

If we contrast and define these two inseparable concepts, we will have both *hana*: exterior symbolic beauty, beauty seen, and *yūgen*: subconscious beauty, beauty felt and responded to, and there can be seen a change of consciousness from beauty that one is made to see to beauty that one is made to feel.

### *Yūgen* (INVISIBLE BEAUTY)

Noh is often called "the art of *yūgen*," but the term *yūgen* (profound sublimity) is not used exclusively in reference to the Noh drama. Indeed, it has been employed in so many ways over the centuries that its essential nature is quite vague. We may clarify the concept by pointing out that it is one of a number of fundamental ideas of beauty originally found in poetic theory. It was at first used to mean elegance or grace. From the days of the poet Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), it was taken to mean the beauty of *yōjō*, lingering charm or suggestiveness, and was considered the ideal of beauty for classical 31-syllable poems called *waka*. It indicated a state of subtle, haunting beauty in the heart, form, and sentiment of song-poems. Later it was refined to become *sabi*, the quiet, rustic beauty embodied in the fundamental aesthetic ideal of haiku. Then, we are told, it was cleansed of quietistic hues and made artistic, coming to mean beauty that perfects.

We see that the nuances of the concept of *yūgen* have changed down through the ages, but Zeami took the idea of graceful, somewhat

of the types of training appropriate for a performer at different ages;

(2) *Monomane Jojo* (Concerning Mimicry), an explanation of acting techniques;

(3) *Mondo Joo* (Questions and Answers), a discussion of important points in performance;

(4) *Shingi ni Iwaku* (Statements on Ritual), a discussion of the sacred ritual from which Noh developed;

(5) *Ōgi ni Iwaku* (Statements on the Deepest Secrets of Noh), advice on how a performer should live;

(6) *Kashū ni Iwaku* (Statements on Training to Acquire Full Flowering), on the nature and creation of Noh; and

(7) *Besshi Kuden* (Supplementary Oral Instructions), a treatise on *hana*, the ideal of beauty in Noh.

The famous saying "Never forget the beginner's mind," as well as the important concept of "detached viewing" (which is discussed in Chapter 3), are found in *Kakyō* (The Flower Mirror), Zeami's major middle-period theoretical work.

## NOH PLAYS CURRENTLY PERFORMED

From the Middle Ages to the present time more than three thousand Noh plays have been written, but the merits or faults of each piece as well as the tastes of each age have resulted in a natural attrition, and today only about two hundred and thirty plays survive. This list includes plays that may be given only once in several decades but for which all the information necessary for performance, details about the music, dance, costumes, and sets, is known. All other plays are considered obsolete. Among them, upon reexamination, works of considerable merit might be found, but unfortunately there is almost no likelihood of their being resurrected and performed.

Most of the plays are performed in all five schools of Noh, but also included are plays performed only in certain schools. The titles of some plays may be written with more than one set of Chinese characters, but their pronunciations are always the same. Some plays have different titles in different schools and this information is also provided.

The plays are listed by subject category, but quite a few Noh may be placed in more than one category. *Dôjô-ji*, for example, is originally a fourth-category (madness or miscellaneous) play, but because of the demonic nature of the main character and the lively dramatic development, nowadays it is usually placed in the fifth (demon-play) category. Similarly, *Hagoromo* is classed as a third-category piece, but the high degree of felicity and the major role played by song and dance make it a multipurpose play, and it is frequently used as a first-, fourth-, or even fifth-category piece. The standard and alternative classifications of each play are clearly specified as in the *utai-bon*, or texts published by all the schools of Noh, the alternatives in parentheses, in accordance with those libretti.

As in many Japanese arts, the time of year is an important consideration in selecting the elements of a composition. Nearly every Noh play is thought appropriate for performance in a certain season: felicitous plays like *Tsurukame* at New Year's; plays with cherry blossoms (*Arashiyama*) in early spring; plays with maple leaves (*Momiji-gari*) or pampas grass (*Izutsu*) in autumn. The majority of plays are appropriate for spring or autumn performances. There are a few plays for which no season is specified, and they may be performed at any time of year. Nowadays the practice of selecting plays for a program on the basis of the seasons is not adhered to as strictly as it once was.

Most plays have a long instrumental dance (*mai*) which gives a good indication of the nature of the play, so within the subject classifications the plays have been grouped by the type of dance. The exception to this is the fourth category, a miscellany of plays, many without a long dance, which are grouped here by theme. Within this category, the dance in the quasi-*waki* plays is usually a *kagura*; in derangement or heartbreak plays, a *kakeri*; in the entertainment or play pieces, a *gaku*; and in about half of the dramatic Phenomenal Noh, the male dance. In the other half of the present-time plays, the sword-play pieces, the envy plays, and the emotional Phenomenal Noh, there is usually no main dance. The types and contents of dances are discussed in Part II.

The number of plays in each category is as follows: First category, 38; Second, 16; Third, 42; Fourth, 86; and Fifth, 53. Thus, the total is 235.

As you can see, by far the largest number of plays falls in the fourth category, and the smallest, in the second. Moreover, in addition to the standard versions of each play, there are a number of variant performance versions (called *kogaki*, or fine print), so the total is actually much higher.

In this list, the plays are categorized by subject and then within each subject category by dance. If you have read the discussion of each of the subjects mentioned above, then this should give you a good idea of the nature of the plays. To find a given play, please look for it by title in the index. (Please note that *Okina*, since it does not belong to any category, does not appear in the list.)

# PLAYS IN THE CURRENT REPERTOIRE

## WAKI NOH (god) First Category

KAMI MAI	TAIKO CHŪ NO MAI	HATARAKI
<i>Awaji</i>	<i>Kureha</i>	<i>Arashiyama</i>
<i>Ema</i>	<i>Seiōbo</i> (Hsi Wang- mu)	<i>Chikubushima</i>
<i>Matsu-no-o</i>	<i>Ukon</i> (3) (4)	<i>Enoshima</i>
<i>Mimosuso</i>		<i>Fuji-san</i>
<i>Shiga</i>		<i>Himuro</i>
<i>Shironushi</i>	GAKU	<i>Iwafune</i>
<i>Takasago</i>	<i>Dōmyō-ji</i> (4)	<i>Kamo</i>
<i>Yōrō</i>	<i>Gendayū</i>	<i>Kinsatsu</i>
<i>Yumi Yawata</i>	<i>Naniwa</i>	<i>Mekari</i>
	<i>Nezame</i>	<i>Kusenoto</i>
	<i>Ōyashiro</i>	<i>Sakahoko</i>
SHIN NO JO NO MAI	<i>Rinzō</i> (5)	<i>Tama no i</i>
<i>Hakurakuten</i> (Pai Lo-t'ien, or Po Chū-i)	<i>Shirahige</i>	<i>U no matsuri</i>
<i>Hōjō-gawa</i>	<i>Tōbōsaku</i> (Tung Fang-shuo)	
<i>Oimatsu</i>	<i>Tsurukame</i> (Gek- kyūden)	
<i>Saoyama</i>		

## WARRIOR NOH (man) Second Category

KAKERI	DAISHŌ CHŪ NO MAI	Sanemori
<i>Ebira</i>	<i>Atsumori</i>	<i>Tomoakira</i>
<i>Michimori</i>	<i>Ikuta Atsumori</i>	<i>Tomoe</i>
<i>Shunzei Tadanori</i>	( <i>Ikuta</i> )	<i>Tomonaga</i>
<i>Tadanori</i>		<i>Yorimasa</i>
<i>Tamura</i>	OTHERS	
<i>Tsunemasa</i>	<i>Kanehira</i>	
<i>Yashima</i>	<i>Kiyotsune</i>	

## WIG NOH (woman) Third Category

DAISHŌ JO NO MAI	Higaki	Ōmu Komachi (4)
<i>Bashō</i>	<i>Hotoke no Hara</i>	<i>Seki-dera Komachi</i>
<i>Eguchi</i>	<i>Izutsu</i>	<i>Senju</i>
<i>Futari Shizuka</i> (4)	<i>Minobu</i>	<i>Sumiyoshi Mōde</i> (1)
<i>Hajitomi</i>	<i>Nonomiya</i>	(4)

*Sumizome-zakura* (4)  
*Teika* (4)  
*Tōboku*  
*Uneme*  
*Yōkihi* (Yang Kuei-  
 fei)  
*Yoshino Shizuka* (4)  
*Yūgao*  
*Yuki* (4)

## TAIKO JO NO MAI

*Fuji*  
*Hagoromo* (1) (4) (5)

*Kakitsubata*  
*Kazuraki* (1) (4)  
*Mutsura*  
*Obasute* (two versions)  
*Oshio* (4)  
*Saigyō-zakura* (4)  
*Seigan-ji*  
*Ume* (1)  
*Unrin-in* (4)  
*Yūgyō Yanagi*

## DAISHŌ CHŪ NO MAI

*Giō (Ninin Giō)* (4)

*Matsukaze* (4)  
*Sōshi-arai Komachi* (1)  
 (4)  
*Yuya*

## TAIKO CHŪ NO MAI

*Hatsuyuki* (4)  
*Kochō* (4)  
*Yoshino Tennin* (1)(4)

## IROE

*Genji Kuyō* (4)  
*Ohara Gokō* (4)

## MISCELLANEOUS NOH Fourth Category

## QUASI-WAKI NOH

*Aridōshi* (1)  
*Kan'yōkyū* (Hsien-  
 yang Kung)  
 (1) (5)  
*Makiginu* (1) (3)  
*Miwa* (1) (3) (4)  
*Murogimi* (1) (3)  
 (5)  
*Tatsuta* (1) (3) (4) (5)  
*Uchito Mōde* (1)  
*Ugetsu* (1) (3) (5)  
*Uroko-gata* (1)

## MADNESS OF FRENZY

*Ashikari* (2)  
*Asuka-gawa* (3)  
*Fuji-daiko* (3)  
*Hana-gatami* (3)  
*Hanjo* (3)  
*Hibariyama* (3)  
*Hyakuman* (3)  
*Jinen Kōji* (2)  
*Kagetsu* (2) (3)  
*Kamo Monogurui* (3)

*Kashiwa-zaki* (3)  
*Kōya Monogurui*  
 (2) (5)  
*Mii-dera* (3)  
*Minazuki-barai* (3)  
*Mitsuyama* (3)  
*Rō-daiko* (3)  
*Sakura-gawa* (3)  
*Semimaru* (3)  
*Sotoba Komachi* (3)  
*Sumida-gawa* (3)  
*Tamakazura* (3)  
*Tōgan Kōji* (1) (2)  
*Tokusa* (2)  
*Tsuchi-guruma* (2)  
*Ukifune* (3)  
*Ume ga E* (3)  
*Uta-ura* (2)  
*Yoroboshi (Yorobōshi)*  
 (2) (3)

## ENTERTAINMENT OF

## PLAY

*Ikkaku Sennin* (1) (5)  
*Kantan (Hantan)* (1)

*Kiku Jidō* (1) (5)  
*Makura Jidō (Kiku  
 Jidō)* (1) (5)  
*Sanshō* (1) (5)  
*Tenko* (1)  
*Tōsen* (1) (5)

## HEARTBREAK

*Akogi* (2)  
*Funa-bashi* (2)  
*Kayoi Komachi* (2)  
*Matsumushi* (2)  
*Motome-zuka* (3)  
*Nishiki-gi* (2)  
*Utō* (2)

## JEALOUSY

*Aoi no Ue* (5)  
*Aya no Tsuzumi* (5)  
*Dōjō-ji* (5)  
*Fujito* (2)  
*Kanawa*  
*Kinuta* (3)  
*Koi no Omoni (Omo-  
 ni)* (5)

SEWA-MONO	<i>Torii-i-bune</i> (3)	<i>Kosode Soga</i> (2)
(Emotional Present-time Plays)		<i>Kusu no Tsuyu</i> (2)
<i>Hachi no Ki</i>	GEKI-MONO	<i>Manjū</i> ( <i>Nakamitsu</i> ) (2)
<i>Hōka-zō</i>	(Dramatic Present-time Plays)	<i>Morihisa</i> (2)
<i>Kagekiyo</i> (2)	<i>Ataka</i> (2) (5)	<i>Nishikido</i> (2)
<i>Mochizuki</i> (5)	<i>Daibutsu Kuyō</i> ( <i>Nara Mōde</i> ) (5)	<i>Sekihara Toichi</i> (2) (5)
<i>Settai</i> (2) (3)	<i>Genzai Tadanori</i>	<i>Shichiki-ochi</i> (2) (5)
<i>Shunkan</i> ( <i>Kikaiga-shima</i> ) (2)	<i>Hashi Benkei</i>	<i>Shōzon</i> (2) (5)
<i>Take no Yuki</i> (3)	<i>Kiso</i> (1) (2) (5)	<i>Shun'ei</i> (2)
<i>Tōei</i> (2)	<i>Kogō</i> (2)	<i>Tadanobu</i> (2)
		<i>Youchi Soga</i> (2) (5)
		<i>Zenji Soga</i> (2) (5)

## ENDING NOH (demon) Fifth Category

HATARAKI	<i>Taizan-pukun</i>	<i>Shōki</i> ( <i>Chung-k'uei</i> )
<i>Dai-e</i> (1)	( <i>T'ai-shan fu-chun</i> )	(1) (2) (4)
<i>Dai-roku Ten</i> (1)	<i>Tsuchi-gumo</i> (2)	<i>Tanikō</i> (2) (4)
<i>Funa Benkei</i>	<i>Zegai</i>	<i>Ukai</i> (1) (4)
<i>Genzai Nue</i> (2)		
<i>Hiun</i> (2) (4)	SEMI-HATARAKI	HAYA-MAI
<i>Ikarikazuki</i> (2)	<i>Aizome-gawa</i> (4)	<i>Ama</i> (1)
(4)	<i>Chōbuku Soga</i> (2) (4)	<i>Genjō</i> ( <i>Kenjō</i> ) (1)
<i>Kappō</i> (1)	<i>Chōryō</i> ( <i>Chang-liang</i> ) (1)	<i>Matsuyama Tengu</i>
<i>Kasuga Ryūjin</i> (1)	<i>Dampū</i> (2) (4)	<i>Raiden</i> ( <i>Tsumado</i> ) (1) (2) (4)
<i>Kokaji</i> (1)	<i>Eboshi-ori</i> (2) (4)	<i>Suma Genji</i> (2)
<i>Kōtei</i> (1) (4)	<i>Genzai Shichimen</i> (1) (4)	<i>Taema</i> (1) (3) (4)
<i>Kō-u</i> ( <i>Hsiang-yu</i> ) (1) (4)	<i>Kumasaka</i> (2) (4)	<i>Tōru</i> (4)
<i>Kurama Tengu</i>	<i>Kuro-zuka</i> ( <i>Adachigahara</i> )	TAIKO CHŪ NO MAI
<i>Matsuyama Kagami</i>	<i>Kuruma-zō</i> (2) (4)	<i>Shōjō</i> (1)
<i>Momiji-gari</i>	<i>Kusanagi</i> (1) (2) (4)	<i>Taihei Shōjō</i> (1)
<i>Ōeyama</i> (2)	<i>Kuzu</i> (1) (4)	
<i>Orochi</i> (1)	<i>Nomori</i>	OTHERS
<i>Rashōmon</i> (2) (4)	<i>Nue</i> (2) (4)	<i>Sagi</i> (1) (3) (4)
<i>Ryōko</i> (1)	<i>Raiden</i> (1) (2) (4)	<i>Shakkyō</i>
<i>Shari</i> (1)	<i>Sesshōseki</i> (2) (4)	<i>Yamamba</i> ( <i>Yamauba</i> ) (1)
<i>Shōkun</i> ( <i>Wan Chao-chun</i> ) (1) (4)		

(See notes on the following page.)

NOTES: *Makura Jidō* and *Kiku Jidō* are the same piece, except in the Kanze School, where *Makura Jidō* is a separate piece.

*Raiden* (Thunderbolt) and *Raiden* (Worship Hall) are sometimes listed as alternate writings for the same title, but there are actually considerable differences in content, so they are listed as two separate pieces.

In addition to the categories shown above, the name *shūgen-mono*, congratulatory pieces, is applied to a group of particularly felicitous plays, such as *Takasago* (*Waki Noh*) and *Shōjō* or *Shakkyō* (*Kiri Noh*).

Also, there are several groups of three plays with special names—yet another indication of the fondness for odd numbers: the Three Winning-Battle Pieces: *Tamura*, *Yashima*, and *Ebira*; the Three Battle Pieces: *Yorimasa*, *Sanemori*, and *Tomonaga* (particularly difficult plays); the Three Reading Pieces: *Ataka* (temple pledge list), *Kiso* (petition), and *Shōzon* (written pledge); the Three Mori's: *Michimori*, *Sanemori*, and *Morihisa* (warriors); the Three Ladies: *Teika*, *Yōkihi*, and *Ohara-gokō* (pursuit of dignity); the Three Old Woman Pieces: (1) *Seki-dera Komachi*, *Obasute*, and *Higaki* (secret tradition); and (2) *Seki-dera Komachi*, *Ōmu Komachi*, and *Sotoba Komachi* (all about the beautiful court poet Komachi in her old age); the Three Monsters: *Kurozuka*, *Tsuchigumo*, *Momiji-gari* (representative plays with monsters); the Three Demonesses: *Aoi no Ue* (elegant), *Dōjō-ji* (average), and *Kuro-zuka* (crude); and the Three Ignobles: *Akogi*, *Ukai*, and *Utō* (a lowly fisherman, a cormorant fisherman, and a hunter, all guilty of the sin of taking life).



✦ 3 ✦

**HOW TO SEE NOH**  
**A Guide to Theaters**

Since it is extremely difficult to get information concerning all the performances of Noh that occur throughout the year, the following list has been added in order that the reader may call the various Noh theaters and inquire directly about programs. There are various kinds of Noh performed, not only the regular monthly or yearly programs that are well advertised, but also many other not so well advertised performances that one can only hear about from the theaters.

**PRINCIPAL NOH THEATERS IN JAPAN**

- Ginza Noh Theater, 6-5-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Tokyo 104; tel. 571-3872  
Hōshō Noh Theater, 1-5-9 Hongō, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113; tel. 811-4843  
Kanze Noh Theater, 1-16-4 Shōtō, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150; tel. 469-5241  
Kita Roppeita Memorial Noh Theater, 4-6-9 Kami-Ōsaki, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141; tel. 491-7773  
Tessen-kai Noh Stage, 4-21-29 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107; tel. 401-2285  
Umewaka Noh Theater, 2-6-14 Higashi-Nakano, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164; tel. 363-7748  
Yarai Noh Theater, 60 Yarai-chō, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162; tel. 268-7311  
Kamakura Noh Stage, 3-5-13 Hase, Kamakura-shi 248; tel. (0467) 22-5557

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Atsuta Shrine Noh Stage, 1 Shingūsaka-chō, Atsuta-ku, Nagoya-shi 456;  
tel. (052) 671-2912

Kawamura Noh Stage, Karasuma-dōri, Kami-Dachūri agaru, Kamigyō-ku, Kyoto 602; tel. (075) 451-4513

Kongō Noh Theater, Muromachi-dōri Shijō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku, Kyoto 604; tel. (075) 221-3049

Kyoto Kanze Noh Theater, 44 Enshōji-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku, Kyoto 606;  
tel. (075) 771-6114

Ōe Noh Theater, Oshikōji-dōri, Yanaginobamba Higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku, Kyoto 604; tel. (075) 231-7625

Nara Komparu Noh Theater, 14 Minami-machi, Hōren, Nara-shi 630; tel. (0742) 22-7929

Osaka Noh Theater, 2-3-17 Nakazaki-Nishi, Kita-ku, Osaka 530; tel. (06) 373-1726

Ōtsuki Seiin Noh Theater, 2 Uchon-machi, Higashi-ku, Osaka 540; tel. (06) 768-9478

Yamamoto Noh Theater, 1-20 Tokui-chō, Higashi-ku, Osaka 540; tel. (06) 943-9454

Minatogawa Shrine Noh Stage, 3-1 Tamon-dōri, Chūō-ku, Kobe 650; tel. (078) 371-1358

Ueda Kanshō-kai Noh Theater, 2-1-14 Ōtsuka-chō, Nagata-ku, Kobe 653; tel. (078) 691-5449

Fukui Municipal Noh Theater, 2-7-15 Haruyama, Fukui-shi 910; tel. (0776) 23-1467

Ishikawa Prefectural Noh Theater, 4-18-3 Ishibiki, Kanazawa-shi 920; tel. (0762) 64-2598

Kita Noh Theater, 2-2-2 Kōnan-chō, Fukuyama-shi 720; tel. (0849) 23-2633

Matsuyama Municipal Hall (Noh Stage), Horinouchi, Matsuyama-shi 790; tel. (0899) 31-8181

Morimoto Noh Stage, 3-8-1 Kego, Chūō-ku, Fukuoka-shi 810; tel. (092) 711-8888

Sumiyoshi Shrine Noh Stage, 3-1-51 Sumiyoshi, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka-shi 812; tel. (092) 291-2670

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Once readers have ascertained when and where certain plays are being performed, they must then decide which plays to see. If they are not very familiar with Noh, and if they happen to choose only plays having aged main characters, they will come to the mistaken conclusion that all Noh suffer from a lack of movement and a tempo that is too slow. This mistake might be enough to prevent them from ever seeing Noh again. To prevent this kind of tragedy from occurring it might be good to see plays in a certain order.

One's first experience will probably be richest if one sees a *kiri* Noh (fifth-category play) first. The quick tempo and active drama are sure to capture the attention. Next, one should view either a dramatic present-time piece, or a play about a deranged woman. These will attract sensitive people with their comments on human emotions. After that, one should see a play that shows the agonies of defeat, one that portrays *yūgen*, the elusive beauty of Noh, and one that depicts the descent of a god.

If one follows this order, one will naturally begin to realize that there are many tempi and many flavors in Noh. It is useful to get used to Noh before exposing oneself to the full beauty of a third-category play, and before one attempts to watch a God Noh (as plays in that category tend to lack any story of interest and are rather boring for the uninitiated).

One can see Noh plays at locations other than the theaters listed above also. Occasionally, Noh is performed at the National Theater; and in fall of 1983, the grand opening of the National Noh Theater is expected. In addition, there are almost always televised programs of Noh on national holidays in Japan on the educational network.

When one sees Noh in a special Noh theater, it might be interesting to sit in different places, in order to get different perspectives, and to try to discover which seats allow one to see which plays the best. Thus, there can be nothing but enjoyment in store for anyone adventuresome enough to experience the world of Noh.

mysterious elegance and infused Noh with it. Likening it to the image of himself, an aristocrat, he writes in *Kakyō: On Attaining the Stage of Yūgen*, that the position and conduct of the aristocrat are exceedingly elegant, and he never ceases garnering people's respect—this is the *yūgen* of human character; the simple, beautifully gentle state that emanates from such an aristocrat—this is the *yūgen* of the human body; and making one's words gentle, carefully studying the daily use of words of the nobility, and making one's language elegant, even a single word one may utter—this is the *yūgen* of language.

How clearly we see here his fondness for the nobility and the culture of the court, a reflection of medieval values. In those days, it seems, beauty was thought to be beyond the reach of the common people. As this rather vague and ethereal concept was developed over time, however, it was applied concretely as the *yūgen* of chant and the *yūgen* of dance, and was finally made quite specific in Zeami's theories of acting techniques as the *yūgen* of the three roles (old man, woman, and warrior) and *yūgen* of demons or the insane. Later, Zeami explains the causal relation between *hana* and *yūgen* by saying that all characters one portrays, whether of high or low birth, a man or a woman, a monk, a commoner, a farmer, a peasant, a beggar, or an outcast—if they carried a spray of blossoms—would look equally beautiful. Whatever their differences in social status, all would be the same in thinking them "beautiful blossoms," and in Noh what corresponds to the blossoms is *hana*, or the Noh character's figure. What gives the figure its quality is the mind, and the starting point for *yūgen* is the careful distinguishing by the mind of the principles of *yūgen* as described.

He is saying, in other words, that all characters should be imbued with *yūgen*, from the graceful, gentle, and beautiful young women or handsome young men, to the lower class characters or even demons. *Yūgen* is not limited to the good and the beautiful. Gradually, however, the scope of this concept was to narrow, until it came to symbolize the delicate, evocative beauty (*yōjō*) of the female character.

The meaning of *yūgen* can be explored by looking at the meaning of the Chinese characters used to write the word. *Yū* means hazy, dim, dark, deep, quiet, or otherworldly, and it is found in such words as *yūshū* (deep contemplation), *yūhei* (confinement), and *yūkon* (spirits of the dead). *Gen* means subtle, profound, or dark, and it is



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*age-uta*: song, 172, 284; see also *sage-uta*

*ai*, see *ai-kyōgen*

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*ai-kyōgen*: interlude actor, 86, 137, 162–63, 251–52, 304, 327

*ai-mai*: dance performed by two actors, 160

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*ashirai-ai*: the *waki*'s accompaniment to the Kyōgen actor during the interlude, 163, 327

*ashirai-buki*: flute accompaniment, 180, 195, 208

*ashirai-goto*: a section of a play characterized by noncongruent rhythm, 195; see also *awase-goto*

*ashirai-uchi*: noncongruent drum accompaniment, 195

*ataru ya no ma*: rhythmical marking, 195

*ato-za*: rear stage, 128, 134–35

*atsuita*: outer robe, 243, 245, 246, 327

*awase-buki*: to play the flute in congruent rhythm, 180, 208

*awase-goto*: a section of a play characterized by congruent rhythm, 195–97; see also *ashirai-goto*

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- daishō-mae*: upstage center, directly in front of *ō-tsuzumi* (q.v.) and *ko-tsuzumi* (q.v.), 130, 288
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- fue-za*: flute-player’s seat, 142
- fue-za-mae*: upstage left, 130, 288
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- ji-byōshi*: chanting with chorus rhythms, 195  
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*kamigaku*: divine performance, 4  
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*kami-uta*: song, 4  
*kammuri*: crown, 248  
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also a name for the other world. It is seen in the words *gen'ō* (immeasurable depth), *genshu* (subtle beauty), and *genri* (profound mystery or esoteric truth). *Yūgen*, the combination of these two characters, expresses profundity and evanescence detached from reality and indicates a mystical state in which beauty is but a premise, something of an unknowable nature. Thus *yūgen* is not something that can be apprehended intellectually; rather, it exists subjectively for the audience, beyond the mere visual level. Michizō Toita has discussed *yūgen* in *Kan'ami to Zeami*, suggesting that *yūgen* cannot be expected to emerge simply by virtue of the intellectual operation of observation; that *yūgen*, first of all, lies far beyond the reach of the intellect, and indeed it was labeled *yūgen* because it is a special spirit that causes us to feel something; that if we say that observation is based on spatial perception, then *yūgen* is somehow related to pure continuous time—in other words, that *yūgen* basically does not exist objectively but is the subjective experience of the human being who knows it.

### *Rōjaku* (QUIET BEAUTY)

The level of beauty in Noh that goes beyond *yūgen* is the state of *rōjaku*. *Rō* means old, and *jaku* means tranquil and quiet; thus *rōjaku* can be thought of as the quiet beauty of old age. There are very few forms of theater that treat in as great a depth as the Noh does the inevitable aging of the human being, as we see not only from the contents of the plays but also from the number of masks for aged characters. Of course we cannot be sure that in the beginning the intent of Noh was to provide for an aesthetic experience through contemplation of the figure of age upon the stage, but in contrast to the warm elegance of *yūgen*, the symbolic beauty of cold, clear, lonely aging is more poetic and of a higher order. This concept was refined over several centuries by the traditional sensibilities of Japan and allowed to blossom quietly. From the point of view of performance, too, Zeami says, "Personification of an old person is the true mystery of the way," and explains that the actor must work not merely on physical form in order to be able to portray the body of the old person, but must also explore the internal process of aging and then externalize it to create the flavor of *rōjaku*.

*ma*: interval of space-time, *xix*, *xx*, 22, 70–74, 116, 126, 136, 168, 189–92, 193, Fig. 21  
*machi-utai*: song, 284–85, 287, 288  
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*mae-ba*: first act, 8; *see also* *nochi-ba*  
*mae-jite*: first-act *shite*, 231, 244, 304, Figs. 89, 91; *see also* *nochi-jite*  
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*mai*: dance, *xvi*, 203, 220–21, 222–23, 352, Fig. 62  
*mai-ginu*: outer robe, 243, 246  
*mai-goto*: dance piece, Tables 16, 30, 33  
*mai-guse*: danced *kuse*, 73, 284; *see also* *kuse*  
*make-shura*: type of Warrior Noh, 35, 53, 54  
*maku no ma*, *see* Noh stage: mirror room  
*Man'yōshū*: eighth-century poetry anthology, 58, 153  
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*michiyuki*: travel song, 82, 284  
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*midare-bin*: wig, 248, 301  
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 Miscellaneous Kyōgen: category of Kyōgen, 102–4  
 Miscellaneous Noh: fourth-category play, 39, 62, 354–55; *see also* Madness Noh  
*mitsu ji*: eight-beat drum pattern, 198–99  
*mitsu-ji utai*: singing style, 198–99  
*mitsuke-bashira*: sighting pillar, 131, 142  
 Miyasudokoro: lover of Genji, 55–56, 304–25, Figs. 14, 120–22  
*mizu-goromo*: outer robe, 243, 244, 247, 251, 304, 326  
*mogidō*: costuming without an outer robe, 242, Fig. 86  
*mondō*: question–answer dialogue, 283  
*monogi*: onstage costume change, 76  
*mu*: nothingness, 15, 48, 74  
*mugen-kaisō-hō*: reflection-in-vision method, 75; *see also* production techniques  
*mugen noh*, *see* Phantasmal Noh  
 Musashibō Benkei, *see* Benkei  
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*naga-bakama*: trousers, 243, 248  
*naga-kamoji*: wig, 248, 301  
*naga-katsura*: wig, 248, 301  
*nakairi*: exit of *shite* before interlude, 8, 34, 77, 84, 89, 90, 255  
*naka-shōmen*: central section of audience, 140  
*nami-gashira*: wave-crest music, 64  
*nanori*: song (of introduction), 82, 283, 286, 288  
*nanori-bue*: entrance music, 288, 306



*nanori-za*: naming seat (same as *jō-za*), 130, 306

Natsume, Sōseki (novelist), 38–39  
*ni-kyoku san-tai*: “two arts (singing and dancing), three characters (old man, warrior, and woman),” 30

*ninjō*: human emotion, 38; see also *giri*

*ni no matsu*: the Second Pine, 144

*nochi-ba*: second act, 8; see also *mae-ba*

*nochi-jite*: second-act shite, 231, 244, 304, Figs. 90, 92; see also *mae-jite*

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Nohgaku: collective term for Japan’s two classical drama forms—Noh and Kyōgen, *xv*, 271–72, Fig. 105

*nohgaku-dō*: Noh theater (building), 114, Table 13

*nohgaku-shi*: master of Nohgaku, 155–57, Table 15

*nohkan*: the Noh flute, 168, 179–80, 184–85, Table 18, Fig. 49

Noh Kyōgen: the Kyōgen part of Noh, usually performed during the interlude, 96

*nohmen*: Noh masks, *xv*, 17, 224–31, Tables 34, 37, 40, Figs. 65–82

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*nor*: rhythmical mode, 169, 174, 185, 192, 193, 195

*noridōgu*: vehicles, 255, 256; see also properties, stage

*noru ji*: congruent rhythm, 198–200, 203

*nōshi*: outer robe, 243, 244, 246

*noshime*: under robe, 243, 244, 247, 250, 251, 252, 304, 326

*nugi-sage*: style of earing costume, 242, Fig. 84

*nuihaku*: outer robe, 242, 244, 245, 246, 247

*obi*: band used to hold something in place, 250, 296; see also *katsura obi*; *koshi obi*

odd numbers, fondness for, 21–26, 30–34, 356

Ōe, Hiroshi (architect), 6

*ōgi*: Noh fan, 56, 98, 212, 251, 257, 258–59, 304, 326, 327

*ō-kawa*, see *ō-tsuzumi*

*oki-dōgu*: placed props, 255; see also properties, stage

Okina: role in a Noh play, 3, 4, 96

*ōkuchi*: trousers, 243, 244, 247, 296, 304, 327

Ōkura School: schools of both *ko-tsuzumi* and *ō-tsuzumi* players and of Kyōgen actors, 156



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*okuri*: metrical unit (also called *okuri ji*), 197, 278; see also *kata ji*; *tori*

*omo*: *shite* (main actor) in a Kyōgen play, 99, 155

*omote*: Noh mask, see *nohmen*

Ono no Komachi, see *Komachi*

*ō-nori*: extended rhythm, 173, 174, 195–96, 204, Table 25; see also *chū-nori*; *hira-nori*

*ō-tsuzumi*: hip drum, 139, 168, 182, Table 19, Fig. 51

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performer and audience, relationship between, *xxi*, 16–20, 42, 94, 113, 346

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quasi-*waki* Noh, 352, 354

*renga*: linked verse, 11, 197

*rikidōfūki*: true demon, 39, 69

*ritsu*: minor tonality, 30, 32; see also *ryo*

robes, outer, 246–47, Table 36; see also under *specific names*

robes, under, 247, Table 36; see also under *specific names*

*rōjaku*: tranquil beauty of age, 10, 14–15

Rokujiō no Miyasudokoro, see *Miyasudokoro*

*rongi*: song, 284

*ryo*: major tonality, 30, 32; see also *ritsu*

*sabi*: quiet, rustic beauty, 12, 15

*sagari-ha*: entrance music, 287, 288

*sage-uta*: song, 172, 284

Sagi School: defunct school of Kyōgen actors, 157

*saidōfūki*: demon with a human heart, 39, 69

Sambasō: character in *Okina*, 3, 4, 96, 99, 155, 168

*san no matsu*: the Third Pine, 144

Sano Genzaemon no Tsuneyo, see *Tsuneyo*

*san-yaku*: the three roles (*waki*, *ai*, *hayashi*), 157

Sarugaku: literally, “monkey entertainment,” various vaudeville-like acts that developed into Noh, 3, 7, 37, 75, 96, 111, 115, 345

*Sarugaku Dangi* (Talks on Sarugaku by Zeami After Age Sixty), 80, 349

*sashi*: song, 173, 283, 284

*sashinuki*: trousers, 243, 244, 248, 296

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self-other relationship, 7-8, 16-19, 20, 127

self view, 16, 17

*senshūroku*: final day, 41

Senzai: character in *Okina*, 4

*sewa-mono*: emotional Phenomenal Noh, 62, 75, 327, 353, 355; *see also* Phenomenal Noh

*shibai*: "sitting on the grass," or theatrical performance, 141

*shi-byōshi*, *see hayashi*

*shidai*: entrance music, 115, 283, 287

*shihan*: a Noh semiprofessional, 155

*shijima-goto*: unaccompanied piece, 285

*Shikadō* (The Way to the Ultimate Flower), 11, 348

*shimai*: solo dance, xxiii, 212, 222

Shimazaki, Tōson (poet and novelist), 114

*shimo-gakari*: Noh schools originally based in Nara, 157

*shin-gyō-sō*: formal-semiformal-informal principle, 23-24, 71-72, 130, 131, 162, Table 8, Fig. 5

*shin no issei*: formal entrance music, 25

*shin no jo no mai*: formal slow dance, 353

*shin-soe-tai*, *see ten-chi-jin*

*shirabe*: tuning up, 286, 306

*shirabe-za*: tuning-up seat, 140

*shirasu*: graveled space, 141, 142

*shite*: the main actor of a Noh play: and acts of Noh, 76, Table 9; costumes, 240, 244-45; donning of mask, 7, 306; in Kyōgen, 98-99; movement of, 132, 140, 214; in Phantasmal Noh, 36, 77; sanctity of space and, 6; in *Shunkan*, 326, 327; types of, 45-69, 157-78, Table 4; *see also mae-jite*; *nochi-jite*

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*shite-kata*: a *shite* actor, 155, 156, 157, 241, 256

Shizuka Gozen: consort of Yoshitsune, 64-65, 88, 245

*shōdan*: structural unit of Noh, 82, 169, 172, 173, 191, 193, 222, 281-87

*shōfu*: melody unit, 274, 287

*shōga*: solfeggio-like system of singing flute melodies, 184-85

*shōmen*: area in front of the stage, 131, 140

*shōmyō* Kyōgen: master Kyōgen, *see* Tarō Kaja Kyōgen

*shōnaka*: center stage, 131

*shōsaki*: downstage center, 131

shoulder drum, *see ko-tsuzumi*

*shōzoku*: robes, *see under specific names*

*shūgen* Noh: felicitous second act of a God Noh, 41, 42

*shūgen-mono*: felicitous piece, 152, 356

*Shunkan*: mask, 326

*shura* Noh, *see* Warrior Noh

*sobatsugi*: outer robe, 243, 245, 247

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- su-gashira*: bare-headed, 299
- sumi*: downstage right, 131
- sumi-bashira*: the corner pillar, 142
- sun-boshi*: headgear, 251, 304
- sumo wrestler, 41, 111, 120, 134
- su no de*: silent entrance, 284
- su no monogi*: silent onstage costume change, 285
- su no nakairi*: silent first-act exit, 285
- suō*: outer robe, 243, 247, 250, 296, 327
- surihaku*: under robe, 241, 243, 247
- su-utai*: plain chant, 170–71, 212
- tabi*: split-toe socks, 217, 220, 241, 252
- taiko*: stick drum, 139, 165, 168, Table 19, Fig. 52
- taiko chū no mai*: dance, 353, 354, 355
- taiko jo no mai*: dance, 354
- taiko-mono*: piece accompanied by all four instruments, 187
- Taira clan, 36, 52, 54, 64, 326
- Taira no Michimori, *see* Michimori
- Taira no Tomomori, *see* Tomomori
- Tale of Genji*, *The*: eleventh-century novel relating the amorous adventures of Genji, 37, 55, 154, 304
- Tales of Ise*: tenth-century narrative interspersed with poems, 37, 154
- Tales of the Heike*: thirteenth-century tale of the Taira-Minamoto war, 34, 52–53, 119, 154, 326
- tare*: wig, 248, 300, 301
- Tarō Kaja Kyōgen: category of Kyōgen, 99–100, Figs. 22, 95
- Tarōbō: name of a *tengu* (q.v.), 65–67
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- ten-chi-jin*: heaven-earth-man principle, 22–23, 48, 122, 161, Fig. 4
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- te-tsuke*: drum scores, 151
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- Toita, Michizō (Japanese Noh researcher), 14
- Tokiyo: regent for the shōgun in Kamakura, 62–63, 89
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- tomo*: servant role in Noh, 155, 160
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- tsubo-ori ōkuchi*: style of wearing costume, 242, Fig. 87
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*utai-bon*: Noh-chant text, *xix*, 151, 197, 351, Fig. 46  
*utai-goto*: a chant piece, 194–203, 223, 283–85, Tables 16, 17; see also *hayashi-goto*; *katari-goto*  
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*za*: school of Noh, 157

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Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443):

co-creator and major aesthetician of Noh (son of Kan'ami Kiyotsugu): as author, 304, 326; on acting technique, 13, 16, 158; on beginners, *xxii*, *xxiii*, 350; on compiling a program, 26–27; on composition, 222; on demons, 39; and the Five-Elements Theory, 30; on *hana*, 10–12; on *Kinuta*, 80; on Kyōgen, 96; life of, 345–50; on *ma*, 73, 74; on madness, 48; on *rōjaku*, 14; on *yūgen*, 12–13, 55, 154

*Zeshi Rokujū-igo Sarugaku Dangi*, *see* *Sarugaku Dangi*



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There are three types of aged characters that appear in Noh. First, in Noh plays with gods as heroes, such as *Takasago* and *Arashiyama*, the protagonist of the first act is an old man, sometimes accompanied by an old woman, beings of great purity, approaching godliness. (There are also aged characters symbolizing insentient tree spirits appearing in plays like *Yugyō Yanagi* and *Saigyō-Zakura*, but these are of a different nature.) Next there are the lively, raging old characters transformed by unrequited love into vengeful ghosts in such plays as *Koi no Omoni* and *Aya no Tsuzumi*. Yet, however poignant the depictions of these characters may be, however filled with great psychological and emotional depth, this can never approach the profundity nor the brutality of the burden of aging borne by every beautiful woman and the dread of the ugliness that must come with the passing of years. The ultimate aged character, therefore, is the old woman seen in such plays as *Obasute*, *Higaki*, or *Seki-dera Komachi*, in which an emaciated figure, hesitating as it approaches the closing moments of life, is tormented by feelings of longing for days gone by. The play *Obasute* is based on the legendary practice of abandoning the aged in the mountains, and is an expression of the state of nothingness (*mu*), that reveals by moonlight the heart, awakened to truth, of an old woman left in the mountains. In *Higaki* a dancing girl's proud past contrasts with the wretchedness and yearning she suffers in her state of aged ugliness, and the attachment to her youthful beauty becomes like the flames of hell torturing the ghost of the old woman. In *Seki-dera Komachi* we see the derangement caused by a longing for the past in Ono no Komachi, a court poet of legendary talent and beauty, now more than a hundred years old, living in a rustic hut.

These pieces are considered the most mysterious, profound, and challenging in the Noh repertoire, not merely because of the difficulty that male performers have in imagining a woman's experience, but also because of the permeating intent to seek ultimate beauty in a state of *kotan* (refined simplicity), *wabi* (subdued elegance), and *sabi* (unadorned beauty), a kind of beauty going beyond the ethereal elegance of *yūgen*, that can be expressed by a flower blossoming on a withered bough. This is the essence of the symbolic beauty of Noh.



## ACTOR AND AUDIENCE

### Self and Other

#### DETACHED VISION

In a theoretical discussion of acting technique, Zeami writes, "To see the figure [of an actor] from the audience is a view detached from the self. This being so, then to see it with one's own eyes is a 'self view.' This is not a detached view. To see with a detached view is to see as if of one mind with the audience. When this happens, the self is enabled to perceive its own figure." (*Kakyō: On Making Movement a Voicing of the Fundamental.*)

To paraphrase, the view of the performer as seen by the audience is truly an objective view, detached from the eye of the performer himself; the view of the performer as seen by his own eyes is a subjective view, and this should be called a "self view." This is not an objective viewing with the mind's eye, detached from one's own physical eyes. When the performer sees himself with the eyes of the others, he sees another true view beyond what his own physical senses can see, and this creates a kind of "detached vision," a fusion of the minds of actor and audience or of self and others, and only when this happens is he truly able to perceive himself as a performer.

This may seem to be an argument for the attitude that any actor should naturally adopt as a general theory, but this passage contains three important concepts concerning the relationship of self and other (1) within the performer, (2) between the performer and the audience,

and (3) between the performing space (stage) and the viewing space (audience). Indeed, we could say that it was the theoretical establishment and practical application of these self-other relationships that enabled Noh to make the great transition from being an entertainment imitative of ritual to becoming a great art.

The first of these three concepts, the self-other nature within the performer, can be seen in the expressions "self view" and "detached view," which state that subjectivity and objectivity must exist simultaneously in the performer. This is a highly sophisticated concept that envisions the performer as one who first denies the subjective with the objective and then goes beyond the objective to find another subjective truth. As we will discuss in detail below, there is a profound relationship between the great importance of the mask in Noh and this idea that the performer truly discovers himself as a performer only through this two-step denial or double negation. The performer, who is transformed into the character by donning the mask, first denies the existence of physical facial expressions and then goes a step further to deny within his consciousness the existence of the mask.

This idea applies not only to Noh but universally to all theater. Moreover, it is worthy of note in society at large, aside from any theatrical intent, for suggesting an answer to the question of what the true self is.

The second concept, the self-other relationship between the performer and the audience, is evident in that in Noh the performer and the audience always act upon each other, through the medium of the play, to create a surrealistic, shared experience. What that expresses is the idea of seeing with a detached view; this is how the way is opened to a shared experience of the play, when the audience and the performer reach a state in which he can see objectively, with a true eye, in the internal self-other quality of the drama, the figure he portrays.

As a Noh play progresses, a diametrical relationship between the nonreality of the performer and the reality of the audience naturally comes about, but the two begin gradually to blend as the actor enters into the fabricated space of the play and as the fabricated beauty made real by created dramatic incidents is absorbed into the everyday experience of each member of the audience. Eventually they join



together in a close mutual relationship and generate a dramatic shared experience.

Basically, the world the spectator perceives with his visual sense is neither what is reflected onto his retina nor a faithful replica of the actor's movements or the stage set-up. There is physiological distortion common to all people: the viewer's particular nature and past experiences are reflected, and usually considerable individual differences arise. Therefore, the experience shared with the performer takes more than one form. Because symbolic expressive means are used in the performance of Noh, the viewer participates in the creation of the play by individual free association and brings to life internally a drama based on individual experience filtered through the emotions of the protagonist. The shared dramatic experience, in other words, is not the viewer's adjustment of himself to the protagonist on stage but rather his creation of a separate personal drama by sharing the play with the performer. Indeed, he becomes that protagonist. Thus, detached viewing exists for the audience as well.

The third concept, the self-other relationship between the stage space and the viewing space is, as Zeami says, seeing as if from the audience. As we have already shown, the sophisticated self-other quality known as "detached viewing" is ultimately a shared experience between the performer and each member of the audience but concentrated in the space surrounding both; exerting a mutual dramatic tension as stage and audience, it creates a site for detached viewing that brings the minds of the performer and the audience together, in other words, the single Noh space. This fact shows very clearly how Noh differs completely from other forms of theater and their spatial consciousnesses. We would diagram this space not as a circle with the actor at the center but as an oval with two foci. An oval, as you know, is the path traced by a point that is the sum of the distances from two fixed points. In like fashion, Noh can be said to be the path traced by the movement of the shared minds of actor and audience, themselves the foci of a self-other relationship bound by the thread of the story, and the oval described thereby, the shape produced when those two circular spaces merge, is the Noh space. Supposing the length of the thread were fixed, if the two foci were extremely close together the oval would be almost circular, but if they were too far

apart the shape would be too flat: in either case the organic relationship of self and other would be lost and no beautiful oval produced.

It is precisely because two essentially opposing elements exist at the proper distance—that is, the performer and the audience on the scale of the Noh theater—that they can join in an artistic operation, maintaining a state of dramatic tension while being guided by the story. Thus it becomes possible to create an ideal Noh space.

## THE ENCOUNTER WITH NOH

We have already seen that the intent of all the self-other relationships in Noh is not apposition but rather active fusion. Thus, the members of the audience are not disinterested observers: each member must participate in building these relationships. This is the encounter with the Noh theater.

Nowadays the word “encounter” (*deai*) is used casually to mean meeting, the opposite of parting, but this is not correct. As the use from ancient times of such phrases as “greet all others on passing,” “respect those you meet,” and “answer all enquiries” shows, an encounter signified a profound involvement, something more than a mere going out (*de*) and meeting (*ai*) someone. The term connotes a dialogue brought about by the brandishing of something itself brought about by the encounter. The word gradually came into such common usage that it was not evolved as a philosophical or theological concept, so in spite of its long tradition in Japanese thought an “encounter” has been “discovered” in recent decades as a new idea.

However, despite the fact that the word “encounter” is used in many ways in daily speech, no other word expresses more succinctly the relationship between performer and audience in Noh than this word in its true meaning. In academic language, one might say that human beings are always in a state of mutual encounter, mediated by dialogue, with whatever is the object. The “mutual” here is between the first and second persons, I and thou. In Noh, however, in the mutuality of play and audience or performer and spectator, it is with the third person, or other, usually considered the bystander, that the close relationship is formed: that seeming contradiction is

overcome in a silent encounter, in a wordless dialogue. This encounter brings about a very sophisticated self-other relationship. Long before any scholarly discussion of such concepts, the idea of the encounter was embodied in the dramatic structure of Noh, and this is one of the most remarkable elements of this ancient theatrical form.

The encounter was initially conceived of as being between man and god (in ritual), then between man and nature (in agriculture), and finally between man and man (in a self-other relationship). In the rural theater of Japan we can see, sometimes in quite primitive form, the encounter between man and god or between man and nature. In Noh, however, the encounter was purposefully made aesthetic and dramatic, to create an artistic beauty different from the spontaneous festival events. It was developed from a religious relationship into a dramatic encounter based on a self-other relationship between man and man. This new relationship gradually grew in importance and finally came to color the very nature of Noh, allowing the coexistence of reality and nonreality. Ultimately, this led to the achievement of the superb dramatic form called *mugen noh*, or Phantasmal Noh, based on an encounter between self and other, between reality and fantasy, between this world and other worlds out of space and time.

## AN AESTHETIC OF DISCORD

### The Harmony of Disharmony

#### THE TRADITIONAL PREFERENCE FOR ODD NUMBERS

In modern Japan odd numbers are considered more felicitous than even numbers, and this comes from centuries of tradition: a child's third, fifth, and seventh birthdays are especially celebrated; classical poetry is composed in three or five units of five or seven syllables; an odd number of flowers is used in a formal arrangement, an odd number of stones in a traditional garden. Even numbers can be divided into two equal parts, resulting in symmetry, while odd numbers of course cannot. At first, a preference for odd numbers may seem less than ideal for the composition of real things (buildings, for example), but this approach to aesthetic consciousness is an intentional rejection of the harmonious in favor of the discordant, a consistent respect for the asymmetrical in time and space constructs. In a space construct, we would call this arrangement a spatial composition with no axis. A spatial arrangement with an axis is symmetrical, always pulling the viewer's focus to the apex of the structure. One famous example of this is the palace of Versailles.

**Dynamic Symmetry**     Despite the symmetry that characterized much of the Chinese art and architecture that flowed into Japan from the sixth century onward, Japanese art and architecture consciously introduced an element of disorder to upset the balance and

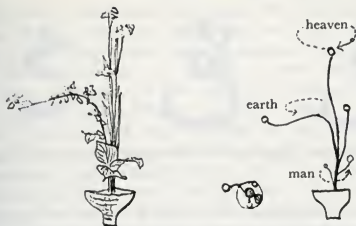


3. The western precinct of Hōryū-ji.

relieve the monotony. An example of this is the layout of the buildings in the western precinct of the temple Hōryū-ji in Nara (Fig. 3), originally built in the seventh century. The five-storied pagoda, which is the central focus of this precinct, is not placed in the center, and both this pagoda and the Main Hall, in an arrangement that seems almost noncreative, exert a certain mutual tension, breaking the symmetry of the connecting corridors. This is a dynamic sort of symmetry.

The final development of this disordering element resulted in compositions of nonaxial space. When we look at a castle with three towers, our axis of vision is not controlled. Rather, our eye is kept in constant motion, the three elements maintaining a subtle balance, while we see a beautiful composition of open spaces, *ma*, from every angle. Thus, the center of the *shape* is never the center of the *space*. This is called dynamic balance.

**Ten-Chi-Jin** Such thought is given direct expression in the basic pattern for flower arrangement (Fig. 4), called *ten-chi-jin* (heaven-earth-man); it is also called *shin-soe-tai* (main subject-secondary subject-object) in the Ikenobo school. Heaven-earth-man expresses a nonaxial, nonharmonious arrangement of three elements, something high, something low, and something in between. It is the conceptual basis for a variety of constructs, used not only in flower arrangement



4. The principle of heaven-earth-man (ten-chi-jin).

but also in the design of the New Year's gate decorations (three pieces of bamboo), or the arrangement of stones in groups of seven, five, and three in classical gardens. Heaven-earth-man describes a spatial composition (an aesthetic triangle) symbolized by three separate elements, the number three being the lowest odd number necessary for juxtaposition; it also expresses a space-time-man relationship.

As we mentioned above, we can find many examples of this preference for odd numbers in Japanese culture. In art and literature, a recurring motif is "snow, moon, and blossoms," a metaphor for the four seasons. Another is the "three branches of the coldest season," pine, bamboo, and plum, which represent longevity, endurance, and felicity with their vital power to withstand the cold of winter. There is also an expression, "the character *shina*," meaning a balanced, pleasing arrangement. The character *shina*, which means goods, consists of three little boxes.

Noh is performed in a space constituted of three elements, near (the stage), far (the mirror room), and in between (the bridge). This asymmetrical arrangement has no axis. Therefore the line of vision of the audience is not limited to one direction, as it is in most theaters, but is able to take in, from every angle, a discordant composition.

**Shin-Gyō-Sō** Complementary to the concept of heaven-earth-man is the concept of *shin-gyō-sō*. The term is most familiar in refer-



5. An old character for "village" written in block, semicursive, and cursive styles.

ence to styles of calligraphy: *shin* writing is similar to block letters, with each stroke distinct; *gyō* writing is less clear and is semicursive; *sō* writing is flowing, cursive, and much abbreviated. Figure 5 shows the old character for "village" written in each of the styles.

The literal meanings of the terms *shin*, *gyō*, and *sō* are "true, moving, and grasslike"; they could also be interpreted as formal, semiformal, and informal. However, the concept of *shin-gyō-sō* does not merely describe a process of abbreviation. It is applied more widely by formalizing into three stages a method of giving substance to a basic pattern created with an odd number of elements in accordance with the principle of heaven-earth-man. If heaven-earth-man is the *shin* stage of composition, then the process of abbreviating the elements, altering the shape, or changing the nature of the creation passes through the *gyō* stage and finds its culmination in the *sō* stage. *Shin-gyō-sō*, in other words, is a principle of progressive transformation leading to maturation or fulfillment. Children first learn to print characters in their true block forms, adults may move beyond that and write in the semicursive style, but only rather accomplished calligraphers can manage the lovely flowing cursive grass script. This principle can be seen in many other arts, including garden design and the tea ceremony.

### *Jo-Ha-Kyū* IN NOH

Perhaps the most important aesthetic concept in Noh is *jo-ha-kyū*. *Jo* means beginning or preparation, *ha* means breaking, and *kyū* means rapid or urgent. The term originally came from Gagaku,

ancient court music imported to Japan from China, and generally it was used to indicate a three-part piece played at a gradually increasing tempo: *jo*—noisy nonbeat, entrance of dancer(s), opening part (introduction); *ha*—fine overall beat, gentle dance, middle part (development); *kyū*—rapid beat, rapid dance, final part (conclusion).

It is not surprising that this tripartite structure was seized upon by the Japanese, with their preference for odd numbers. It was adopted as an ordering principle for poetry, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and eventually Noh, and as it was taken into the Japanese language the term *jo-ha-kyū* came to have a much broader meaning, distinct from the original concept. I would like to offer my personal theory about the process of transformation and expansion of that concept, and I begin by asking why it is *jo-ha-kyū* and not simply beginning-middle-end, slow-medium-fast, or Part I-Part II-Part III?

*Jo* means beginning, as in beginning-middle-end. It refers to position and thus is a spatial element.

*Ha* means break or ruin. It suggests destruction of an existing state and thus is a disordering element.

*Kyū* means fast, as in *kankyū* (tempo) or slow-medium-fast. It refers to speed and thus is a temporal element.

Although we would not naturally link the three words beginning-break-fast, they take on a deeper significance when the linguistic hierarchies are transcended and they are joined together. The concept *jo-ha-kyū* unifies the contradiction of the essentially opposing concepts of space and time, binding them with a breaking element. The result is the discovery of beauty in unbalanced harmony and a process for reaching fulfillment. We might say that it allows us to apprehend the spatial balance of heaven-earth-man within time, seeing position in space and speed in time as one.

As it is used in Noh, the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* also incorporates the principle of *shin-gyō-sō*. Thus it takes on an even wider significance as a great ordering principle, governing all of the flow of time and the changes of space occurring in Noh. This is clearly shown in the titles of movements such as heaven-earth-man stamping, the *Jo* dance, the *Ha* dance, the *Kyū* dance, and of instrumental pieces such as *Shin no Issei* (stately entrance music).

*Jo-ha-kyū* is employed as an ordering principle in compiling a



program of plays, composing each play, categorizing the parts of the performance space, and determining the basic rhythms within each Noh. The different nuances of each of these applications will be discussed here.

***Jo-ha-kyū* in the Compilation of a Program** In arranging a program of Noh plays, *jo-ha-kyū* is used as a principle of production, determining which plays should be presented and in what order. *Jo* moves along smoothly, *ha* effects a great variety of changes, and *kyū* brings lively action and an end. *Jo* does not necessarily mean slow. In *Kakyō: Concerning Jo-Ha-Kyū*, Zeami lists the guidelines to be followed in making a program, and his ideas can be summarized as follows: As *jo* is the beginning, it should be the embodiment of a basic style and posture, and the first Noh of the day must be of this nature. Therefore, it should be a Noh with a clear story line running through, with a celebratory quality, and without undue complex detail. The second Noh must have a very straightforward theme, be more vigorous, and have a different visual impact that is still decorous; it should have no surplus of detail, nor should it offer the actor a chance to display his virtuosity. Hence, it is still a part of the *jo* mode. The third Noh of the day begins the true *ha* section. While *jo* is an artless, natural expression, the significance of *ha* is that it harmonizes with and develops that expression to make it understandable. Beginning with the third Noh, therefore, the acting must employ considerably refined techniques and must have visual effects imbued with a thorough sense of characterization. It is the most important Noh in the cycle. The *ha* section also extends to the fourth play, allowing the actor a chance to more dynamically display his versatility. *Kyū* signifies the end, and an appropriate piece for the final part of the program should be performed. What I have styled the *ha* mode has broken up the uncomplicated *jo* quality of the beginning and has given the performer an opportunity to make use of all his talents. *Kyū*, on the other hand, is that single, lasting impression that pushes the *ha* to its limit. Therefore, the *kyū* piece should be an exuberant spectacle of vigorous gestures, rapid dancing, and strenuous movements that fills the audience with wonder.

In Zeami's day the five-play program discussed in Chapter 5 had not yet been established, but it is clear that plays were performed

in order by subject—god, man, woman, lunatic, demon—in accordance with the principle of *jo-ha-kyū*, and that each piece was assigned a certain level or rank, reflecting a concept that encompasses position, tempo, and quality.

***Jo-ha-kyū* of a Play** *Jo-ha-kyū* governs both the performance and the composition of a play. In other words, the principle applies both to the way segments of music and dance are categorized and combined to create a play and to the way the actor modulates the intensity, style, and performance technique during a play. *Jo* is the introductory part of the play, *ha*, the development, and *kyū*, the conclusion, and this structural principle is linked to tempo: the play begins slowly, breaks into a faster pace, and builds to a rapid conclusion. As Table 1 illustrates, a play is normally made up of five sections, called *dan*. The first *dan* is *jo*, the middle three are *ha*, and the final *dan* is *kyū*. The great dramatist Chikamatsu Monzaemon later adopted this system to create puppet plays with a *jo-ha-kyū* five-*dan* structure. The structure of the plays will be discussed in detail in Chapter 17.

***Jo-ha-kyū* of the Performance Space** The process of acting itself is formalized by the application of the principles of *jo-ha-kyū* to the performance space. The far end of the bridge, closest to the curtain, is *jo*, the middle section is *ha*, and the section that abuts the stage is *kyū*, evidence of the importance of the actor's entrance and procession down the bridge to the stage. The stage itself is also divided into three regions: the rear third (upstage) is the *jo* region, the middle is the *ha* region, and the front (downstage) is *kyū*. The style and feel of the acting should accord with the position of the performer on the stage or bridge. These three areas are also called the *shin*, *gyō*, and *sō* regions respectively, which makes it clear that *jo-ha-kyū* is not limited to tempo. Contrary to the actual slope of the level stage floor (and to stage terminology in the English language), to go up (*agaru*) means to move toward the front of the stage (downstage) and to go down (*sagaru*) means to move toward the rear (upstage), but I will follow Western stage convention is using the terms upstage and downstage.

Table 1. *Jo-Ha-Kyū* in *Noh*

ONE DAY'S PROGRAM OF NOH PLAYS	(level) (group) (subject) (section) <i>dan</i> (subsections) <i>shōdan</i>	<i>Jō</i> LEVEL <i>Waki Noh</i> God <i>Jō</i> from self-intro- duction of <i>waki</i> to retirement of <i>shite</i>	<i>Jō</i> OF <i>Ha</i> LEVEL <i>Shura Noh</i> Warrior Introductory <i>Ha</i> from <i>tsure</i> shidai to age- <i>uta</i>	<i>Ha</i> OF <i>Ha</i> LEVEL <i>Kazura Noh</i> Woman Developmental <i>Ha</i> from <i>shite issei</i> to age- <i>uta</i>	<i>Kyū</i> OF <i>Ha</i> LEVEL <i>Monogurui Noh</i> (derangement) Mad person Conclusory <i>Ha</i> from <i>nochi-</i> <i>waki issei</i> to <i>kuse</i>	<i>Kyū</i> LEVEL <i>Kiri Noh</i> (end) Demon <i>Kyū</i> to end of <i>kiri</i>
ONE PHRASE OF CHANT		<i>Jō</i> First Hemistich (7 syllables)	<i>Ha</i>			<i>Kyū</i> Last Hemistich (5)
ONE MEASURE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC		<i>Jō</i> from beat 8.5 of preceding measure to beat 4	<i>Ha</i>			<i>Kyū</i> from beat 5 beat 8
THE MAIN STAGE		<i>Jō</i> Region ( <i>Shin</i> ) <i>shite</i> spot <i>daishō-mae</i> <i>fue-za-mae</i>	<i>Ha</i> Region ( <i>Gyō</i> ) <i>waki-shō</i> <i>shōnaka</i> <i>Jūtai-mae</i>		<i>Kyū</i> Region ( <i>Sō</i> ) <i>sumi</i> <i>shōsaki</i> <i>waki-za-mae</i>	
BRIDGE		<i>Jō</i> place Third Pine (mask boards)	<i>Ha</i> place Second Pine (instrument boards)		<i>Kyū</i> place First Pine (fan boards)	

***Jo-ha-kyū* of Rhythm** We have discussed how the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* applies to composition and to place, but here it applies only to the speed of performance. *Jo-ha-kyū* governs all the rhythms of Noh, based on the assumption that *jo-ha-kyū* is the natural rhythm of human life, that all thought and verbal modulations proceed not at an even pace but with time on an incline, so to speak. The idea is that the most natural, human way of being and doing is to begin slowly and gradually build to a rapid climax, to stop, and begin again. The *jo-ha-kyū* of rhythm in Noh, in other words, is the application of the theory that because human beings always exist in a state of unbalanced harmony, our aesthetic consciousness of rhythm also exists within a disharmonious construct. *Jo-ha-kyū* in Noh rhythm is not simply a rough subdivision into three parts of increasing tempo; it applies on every level, from each phrase of chant to each movement by the actor. This is discussed in more detail in the section on rhythm in Chapter 12.

Table 1 has been compiled as an aid to understanding. It illustrates the *jo-ha-kyū* of a program of plays, a single play, a line of text, a measure of instrumental music, the stage, and the bridge. I will refer to it repeatedly as our discussion continues.

It is interesting to note that the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* applies to many other forms of traditional music, dance, and drama as well, including Kabuki, the puppet theater (Bunraku), Japanese dance (Buyō), and the music of the shamisen, the koto, and the shakuhachi flute.

## THE FIVE-ELEMENTS THEORY Its Significance in the Five-Play Cycle

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE FIVE-ELEMENTS THEORY

When we look at early theoretical treatises, we see evidence of an attempt to gather and govern the many elements of Noh by organizing them into groups of five. Zeami writes in *Kakyō: On Making Movement a Voicing of the Fundamental*: "The breath that comes from the five yin organs is divided into five forms and becomes five tones and six modes. . . . The human body produces the voice from the five yin organs, setting into vibration the five sense organs; this is the beginning of dance."

In modern language we might say that there are five types of breath coming from the five yin organs of the human body, and that they become the five tones and six modes (three *ritsu*, or minor, modes and three *ryo*, or major, modes). Similarly, to emit the five voices from the five yin organs one uses the five senses and moves in five ways—and out of those movements emerges dance. This was Zeami's explanation of how the body, voice production, and dance are connected. In addition, we find scattered throughout his writing references to things grouped or classified in fives: the five methods of dance (*go-chi*); the five necessities that an actor must master (the two arts, singing and dancing, and the three body types, old man, warrior, and woman—*ni-kyoku*, *san-tai*); and the five categories of structural elements (music, dance, acting, gesture, and emotion).

Much of the culture in Japan has developed from interpretations of continental culture, including Buddhism, art and architecture, and the ancient Chinese five-elements cosmology, and this theory of the five elements and their correspondences was an important component of medieval Japanese scholarship. Phenomena and objects were organized into groups of five and believed to correspond to the five elements and the five yin organs of the human body. This theory had gained currency in Japan much earlier, and could be found in Gagaku-related writings and even in textbooks; it was apparently the prevailing wisdom of Zeami's day. Table 2 shows some of the correspondences proposed by the theory.

We might call the Five-Elements Theory a human-centered way of thinking that signifies a universal process of change. Here is a simple explanation of some of the categories. The Five Elements are those five essential units believed in ancient Oriental cosmology to

**Table 2. Correspondences of the Five-Element Theory**

Five Elements	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Planets	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Seasons	spring	summer	late summer	autumn	winter
Directions	east	south	center	west	north
Yin Organs	liver	heart	spleen, pancreas	lungs	kidneys
Yang Organs	gall bladder	small intestine	stomach	large intestine	bladder
Minds	soul	spirit	will	emotion	imagination
Root Organs	eyes (sight)	tongue (speech)	mouth (taste)	nose (smell)	ears (hearing)
Emotions	anger	joy	desire	sorrow	fear
Colors	blue	red	yellow	white	black
Modes (Keys)	<i>sōjō</i> (G)	<i>ōshiki</i> (A)	<i>ichikotsu</i> (D)	<i>hyōjō</i> (E)	<i>banshiki</i> (B)
Tones (Intervals)	<i>kaku</i> (fourth)	<i>chi</i> (fifth)	<i>kyū</i> (tonic)	<i>shō</i> (second)	<i>u</i> (sixth)
Vowels	u	i	a	o	e

make up all things in the universe; the properties of these elements, by extension, give names to the Five Planets visible to the naked eye. The Five Colors are the three primary colors plus light and dark. The Five Seasons are those experienced by central China, and the Five Directions are interpreted from the viewpoint of China's Yellow River basin (the center) and the surrounding rocky mountains to the north, the sea to the east, the tropics to the south, and the desert to the west.

Corresponding to these categories are the Five States perceived by the Five Root Organs, the Five Times, the Five Consciousnesses of the mind, the Five Emotions, and the Five Stages of development. There were even Five Vowels governing the rhyming scheme in poetry, and in Gagaku, the Five Tones that make up the pentatonic scale give rise to the Six Modes, the three major (*ryo*) modes (*sōjō*, *ichikotsu*, and *taishiki*) and the three minor (*ritsu*) modes (*hyōjō*, *banshiki*, and *ōshiki*).

### THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF NOH PLAYS

Noh plays are classified into five categories according to their main characters—gods, men, women, lunatics, or demons—and this system is thought to have been conceived in conjunction with the Five-Elements Theory, as was the compilation of a program made up of one play from each category, in the order given, or the five-play cycle. Today, considerations of time often result in abbreviated programs of only two or three Noh plays, one or two Kyōgen pieces, and some short dances, but the five-play cycle is the original and correct one, and a full program begins with *Okina* and then continues throughout the day with a play from each category. This method was even made into law in the days of the regulation-obsessed Tokugawa shogunate.

The principle of the five-play cycle not only serves in the compilation of a program but also functions in the establishment of a correspondence between nature in its providence and man, who is the life-form that both performs and watches Noh. By this I mean that the five-play cycle plots five plays on five subjects against the passage of one day. We human beings exist within two time bands, a solar, active day and a lunar, restful night, and the five stages leading to

artistic fulfillment in Noh divide that solar band into five parts. Noh was originally meant to be performed in the daytime and nighttime performances were the exception. This is closely related to the directional orientation of the Noh stage, which properly faces south. The division into five also reflects the traditional preference for odd numbers, and, as seen in Table 2, it corresponds to the operating conceptual framework of *jo-ha-kyū* and provides an appropriate compositional framework for Noh's characteristic structural elements. If we diagram these two frameworks, the conceptual (the degree of *yūgen* in the *jo-ha-kyū* system) and the structural (category and position in the program), we get a pyramid in which a third category play, whose level is that of developmental *ha*, is at the apex (Table 3). Clearly the artistic high point of a Noh performance is the play about woman. The measure of a play is always the degree of *yūgen* innate in it. The *jo-ha-kyū* of a day of Noh, in other words, means that the god is a gentle being of morning; the warrior's flashing sword reflects the blazing noonday sun; the climax of *yūgen* comes at midday, when our energy is at its height; the depths of madness parallel the sun's

Table 3. The Five Subject Categories and the Level of *Yūgen*

	<div style="text-align: center;">           Developmental <i>Ha</i>            /                      \            Introductory <i>Ha</i>      Conclutory <i>Ha</i>            /                      \  <i>Jo</i>                                      <i>Kyū</i> </div>				
Degree of Yugen					
Subject	God	Man	Woman	Lunatic	Demon
	Intro- duction	Development→Climax			Conclusion
Category of Noh	God	Warrior	Woman	Derange- ment	Ending
Example	<i>Taka- sago</i>	<i>Michi- mori</i>	<i>Matsu- kaze</i>	<i>Sumida- gawa</i>	<i>Momiji- gari</i>
Nature	Congra- tula- tory	Other- worldly	At- tached	Sorrowful	Con- clutory



decline; and the demon is the personification of the growing darkness.

As was mentioned earlier, full programs of five Noh plays are nowadays given infrequently, so the significance of the relationship of the cycle to the time of day is gradually weakening, but the principle is still honored, even in abbreviated programs. In a performance of even two plays, a demon piece would never precede a woman piece.

Let us now look at each of the five subject categories. (Table 3 gives example pieces for each category and at the same time shows a typical day's program).

**God Plays (First Category)** The plays in this category belong to the *jo* level. A first category play is properly given following (beside) *Okina*, hence the name *waki* (side) Noh; it is also sometimes called *kami* (god) Noh, or *shinji* (Shinto ritual) Noh.

The *kami* of Japan, having no specific form, are quite unlike the gods of Greece; while those gods are always considered to be manifestations of logos, *kami* have existence only in thought and language. In Noh, however, they are portrayed with concrete images.

The chief character is the god itself, temporarily appearing in the world of humans, manifesting godly majesty and bestowing its blessings upon the world. Plays in this category create a generally felicitous mood, but since the stories are simple enactments of familiar myths, they tend to be somewhat lacking in dramatic interest and are rarely performed, except as the first Noh at New Year's. Nearly all God Noh have first and second acts, with a *nakairi* in between, when the *shite* withdraws. (See Fig. 6)

**Warrior Plays (Second Category)** These plays are of the introductory *ha* level, the beginning of the developmental stage of the program. They are also called *shūra* (warrior) Noh, because the central figure of the play is usually a warrior who fell in battle. Most of the plays are based on incidents in *Tales of the Heike*, and the stories turn around the tragic experiences of characters caught in the whirlpool of the fight to the death of the two great clans, the Genji (Minamoto) and the Heike (Taira). The majority of plays in this category are *make-shura*, battle pieces that depict the pathos of the hero in defeat, showing both the misery and glory of death. Nearly all of the warrior plays are two-act (*fukushiki*) Phantasmal (*mugen*) Noh, a struc-

6. *God Noh: Takasago.*



7. *Warrior Noh: Atsumori.*



8. *Woman Noh*: Izutsu.

ture in which time and space are transcended as life is viewed from the perspective of death. The *shite* (main character) in the first part tells of something that happened in the past and in the second part acts out that tale, in a dramatically concentrated form, in the present.

These plays are almost exclusively about men, but the hero of one warrior play, *Tomoe*, is a woman. In this category there are also three *kachi-shura*, battle pieces that celebrate victory. (See Fig. 7)

**Woman Plays (Third Category)** These are of the developmental *ha* level, the unfolding of the developmental stage of the program. The actor playing the woman who is the main character wears a wig, so the plays in this group are also known as *kazura-mono*, or wig pieces. Many woman plays, based on stories from the classics of court literature such as *The Tale of Genji* or the *Tales of Ise*, depict different images of the lovelorn state that seems to be the fate of many

woman with great delicacy, in beautiful masks and lavish costumes of heavy silk brocade. These plays draw the viewer into the elegant, evocative, and mysterious state of *yugen*. The hero may be a deity, a heavenly being, a living woman, a ghost, or some other female being. There are even a few plays in the third category in which the main character is male. The Women Noh occupy the most important position in the five-play cycle, and among them are many of the most inspired and best-known plays in the Noh repertoire. The majority are two-act Phantasmal Noh. (See Fig. 8)

**Madness Plays (Fourth Category)** These plays are of the conclusory *ha* level, the most intense part of the developmental stage. They are also called *monogurui-mono*, or lunatic pieces, and *kyōjo-mono*, madwoman pieces. The apparent madness of exorcism and shamanistic religious rites were part of the original form of Sarugaku, and they remain, although transformed, in the form of possession by a god or derangement and give the name "madness" pieces to this category of Noh.

Derangement is the release of the self from all normal bounds precipitated when an already abnormal state of mind, created by extreme human suffering or sadness, is suddenly ignited, either by some event or by an explosion of violent emotions like love, yearning, or jealousy. Clearly such a deranged state is a kind of possession that plunges the wandering soul into a trance of unknowing. In Noh, the mad character is not portrayed to the point of dissolution. Rather, the depiction focuses on the process whereby the character, usually a woman, becomes deranged, and the story is told through dramatic events of great beauty and poetry. Madness, then, is in reality seen as a highly spiritual state accompanied by separation from the self. The separation may take the form of having another spirit existing within oneself in order to be able to receive signs from the outside or of intentionally replacing one's own spirit with another. It can be the liberating inner peace for which we human beings have constantly, if unconsciously, searched down through the ages, and it may even be the image of such yearning. I have the feeling that this is the reason that Noh plays with deranged heroes evoke such sympathy. The madness in Noh is not and should not be seen as a mere vestige of early religious rites; it is a poignant, sympathy-inspiring element



9. *Madness Noh: Sumida-gawa.*

intentionally introduced into some of the plays to give them greater depth.

Many of the plays in this category feature a realistic or imitative (*monomane*) acting style with a great deal of action, and some have such a melodramatic flavor that they seem more like Kabuki than Noh. The theme of many Kabuki plays is the conflict between one's duty to family or society (*giri*), and one's emotional needs (*ninjō*); thus, fourth-category Noh plays with similar stories are sometimes called *ninjō* pieces. Such plays are specially mentioned by the novelist Sōseki Natsume in *Three-Cornered World* (*Kusamakura*): "Even in Noh there is a strong sense of human feeling (*ninjō*). There can be no guarantee that *Shichiki-ochi* or *Sumida-gawa* (Fig. 9) will not move one to tears, despite the fact that it is given life through a technique of expressing with thirty percent feeling and seventy percent art. The sense of suffering we perceive in Noh is not created by a skillful depiction of the true human feelings of the lower classes. On the contrary—it emerges when the true state is cloaked in many layers of art and

acted out in a slow, deliberate way that could not occur in the real world."

This category also includes a miscellany of genres that do not fit into the other categories—entertainment pieces, pieces about unrequited love or envy, and dramatic emotional pieces set in the present—and there are many different kinds of main characters—old people, blind men, warriors, women, spirits of the living, and ghosts of the dead—so the plays in this group are also called *zatsu*, or miscellaneous, Noh. About half of them belong to the phenomenal (*genzai*) form and half to the phantasmal (*mugen*) form.

**Demon Plays (Fifth Category)** These plays are of the *kyū* level. They are called *kiri* (cut, end) Noh, *tome* (stop) Noh, and also *kichiku* (demon-beast) Noh. They feature a great deal of spectacle, and some have large casts.

In Noh, the demon is treated as a symbol of evil or the embodiment of horror rather than as any particular imaginary creature. Zeami identified two types of demons: the *saidōfūki* (unsteady demon), a being with a demon's body but with a human heart, whose suffering symbolizes human wickedness; and the *rikidōfūki* (powerful demon), a true demon in mind, body, and spirit, horror incarnate, a being of the underworld.

The former type can be understood in the modern world, too: it is a sophisticated creature that represents the evil hidden deep within human nature. This is the type of demon that Noh explores most deeply. The latter type, a demon in both mind and body, an imaginary creature, a monster from hell, was apparently taken up by Noh for its dramatic value in satisfying a psychological need for a thrill. (See Fig. 10)

In addition to the demons in the fifth category plays, goblins, sprites, phantoms, vengeful ghosts, and animals appear, as well as a unique creature called a *tengu*.

The *tengu* is an elusive, magical, mountain-dwelling winged goblin with a red face and a long nose. It kidnaps people or knocks them down, stirs up whirlwinds, causes mountain echoes—indeed, anything that people find threatening is attributed to a *tengu*. Its magic power symbolizes a supernormal human power as opposed to the super-



10. Ending Noh: Tsuchi-gumo.

natural power of demons. *Tengu* sometimes appear in the guise of mountain priests, carrying a characteristic fan of feathers, and perform acts of magic, both good and evil. *Tengu* are identified by the length of their noses: the one with the biggest nose is the chief *tengu*, and the ones with the smallest noses are the underling *karasu*, or crow, *tengu*. Noh plays that have *tengu* as the main character are grouped together and called *tengu* pieces.

Among the animals that appear in plays of the fifth category are a fabulous fox-woman (in *Sesshōseki*, or Death Rock), a chimeralike bird-creature (in *Nue*, or Nightbird), the spirit of a fish (in *Kappo*), the mythical *shishi*, or the Chinese lion-dogs (in *Shakkyō*), and a heron (in *Sagi*).

However, the demon pieces are really the most important. The overall tempo is rapid, and the action is violent. A storm appropriate to the concluding Noh builds up and bursts on stage and then is suddenly over.

In most forms of theater, such a rousing finale would be followed



by volleys of applause from the audience, the falling of the curtain amidst the excitement, and the end of the play, but at this point in a *kiri* Noh the program is still not over.

## THE UNFINISHED QUALITY OF NOH

It is said that originally there was no concept analogous to eschatology nor a view of an end in Japanese thought. The general Japanese view of life and death—that the present world, inherited from the past, is linked to the future world by a temporary ending called death, and that infinitely into the future one encounters no end—supports this idea. In the same way, the Noh in the fifth category do not mark a final conclusion but a temporary cutoff that might even be considered the beginning of an endless succession. Evidence of this is the custom of singing the *tsuke-shūgen*, or attached felicitations, at the end of the program. As the *shite* of the *kiri* Noh exits, the chorus chants an excerpt from a *waki* Noh—offering felicitations and at the same time suggesting a cycling on to the *waki* Noh that will begin the next program on another day. An extremely formal program of five plays may be followed by a special *shūgen* Noh, or the felicitous second act of a *waki* Noh, and the *tsuke-shūgen* is an abbreviation of that. The most commonly used *tsuke-shūgen* comes from the end of the play *Takasago*:

The pleasures of a thousand autumns gladden the people,  
The joys of ten thousand years give them new life.  
The wind in the Twin Pines  
Softly sighs, giving voice to songs of great delight,  
Softly sighs, giving voice to songs of great delight.

This is “the *Senshūroku*,” the source of the modern Japanese custom of calling the last day of a theater run or even a sumo tournament the *senshūroku*, or even the “*raku* day,” but often the term is mistakenly used to mean the final or concluding day. The unfinished quality we see in Noh was handed down to Kabuki, and just as the final Noh is called the *kiri* Noh, so the final play or act in a day of Kabuki



is called the *ō-giri*, or great cut. (The verb *kiru* actually means to cut, divide, or interrupt, and only by extension to end.)

Truly, the unfinished quality of Noh signifies quite clearly that the shared experience born of the encounter between actor and audience is not limited to the duration of the performance; it extends in cycles on to the following performance and thereafter.

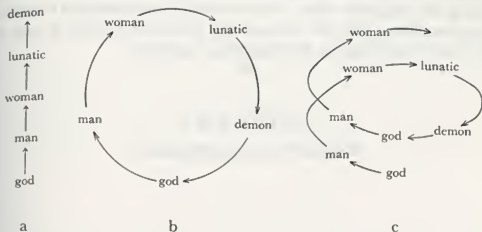
Occasionally a memorial performance called *tsuizen* Noh is given. As this is usually not a happy occasion, the felicitous *shūgen* is replaced by a sad, quiet passage (*tsuika*) selected from some appropriate play, such as the conclusion of the play *Tōru*:

The shadows dispersed by the growing light  
Call me back into the nether realms;  
I enter, alas, loath to part with memories,  
Loath to leave nought but a memory behind.

This song is offered as an expression of the sadness and regret of the mourners and in lieu of a prayer for the repose of the deceased's soul in the afterlife. However, if the final Noh of the program is itself appropriately felicitous (such as *Shakkyō*) or mournful (*Tōru*), then no other song is added at the end of the program.

I hope it is clear from this discussion that the pattern of a cycle of Noh plays, from the blessings of a god to the salvation of a demon and then back to the beginning, is an overall configuration that accords with the Buddhist theory of salvation, that aims to achieve artistic realization by weaving together the workings of the human heart under the protective power of the gods and mercy of the Buddha, and, moreover, that reflects the concept of an unending cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Thus, the compilation of five plays in a program based upon the principles of *jo-ha-kyū* is a linear flow (Fig. 11a), but understood in light of this idea it becomes a circle beginning with the god (*waki*) Noh (Fig. 11b).

When several cycles of Noh are given, a series of different programs, often called subscription Noh in the old days, then the linear movement of Figure 11a is combined with the circular movement of Figure 11b to produce a helix in Figure 11c. In other words, the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* applies to a series of cycles just as it does to a series of plays. After a five-play program today, a five-play program



11. *Noh as a stright line, a circle, and a helix.*

tomorrow starts in a slightly different place, and over several days the series achieves artistic fruition.

Most of the stories and characters in Noh come from Japanese myths, legends, literary tales, or poetry collections, but there are also a few that are taken from the tales and legends of China and India. These are called *karagoto*, and the main character may be a human being, an animal, or a mythological creature from a foreign land. Among the well-known *karagoto* are *Kantan*, about a Chinese boy with a pillow that gives miraculous dreams; *Shōjō*, about a red-faced wine-loving water sprite; *Ikkaku Sennin*, about a one-horned hermit; and a number of plays based on Chinese legends. These plays do not have any exotic feeling because they are not translations of the originals but adaptations of the spirit of each story, skillfully made Japanese. There are, it should be noted, no *karagoto* plays among the Warrior Noh, which are tales of Japanese heroes.

In this chapter I have classified the plays by subject, and this might be called a vertical division. The plays can also be divided horizontally into *genzai* Noh, or present-time Phenomenal Noh, and *mugen* Noh, or dream-time Phantasmal Noh, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. This division by time treatment is not as clear-cut as the

division by subject, but basically it allows one to locate every Noh in one of ten categories. When one sees Noh, if this knowledge is added to a familiarity with the stories of the plays, one is likely to have a far more understanding and satisfying experience.

✦ 6 ✦

**THE SHITE**  
**Characters as Symbols**

The *shite* of a Noh play is what defines the special nature of the drama, and it may be any of a variety of divine beings; a human being, young or old, male or female; a ghost; a vengeful spirit; a demon; an animal; or an imaginary creature. The image of the human character, which is of greatest relative importance, is not evoked through interaction with other human beings; rather, the character is given life and breath by depiction of the complexities of life and death involved in that figure's personal battle with fate—this is what is deeply impressed upon the consciousness of the viewer. Thus the cast of a Noh play is kept as small as possible, and each play focuses on just one cross section of, or one single event in, the life of one person.

**TYPES OF CHARACTERS**

Table 4 provides a list of the types of characters that appear in each act of a play, with an example of a play, the name of the main character (or *shite*), the subject category of the play, and the “foil” character (or *waki*).

This table is especially useful in enabling the reader to see at a glance the various transformations and appearances of the *shite*.

Table 4. Examples of *Shite*

APPEAR- ANCE	TITLE OF NOH	SHITE	SUBJECT	WAKI
human	<i>Ataka</i>	Musashibō Benkei (warrior monk)	(madness)	Togashi
	<i>Yuya</i>	Yuya (consort of Taira no Munemori)	(woman)	Taira no Munemori
ghost	<i>Kiyotsune</i>	Taira no Kiyotsune (warrior)	(man)	Awazu no Saburō (retainer)
	<i>Matsukaze</i>	Matsukaze and Murasame, sisters (lovers of the poet Ariwara no Narihira)	(woman)	priest
human	<i>Hachi no Ki</i>	Sano no Genzaemon Tsuneyo (changes from civilian to warrior garb)	(madness)	Hōjō Tokiyori (regent) (disguised as priest)
	<i>Hanagatami</i>	Teruhimae→ same as madwoman	(madness)	retainer
human ghost	<i>Koi no Omoni</i>	old gardener his angry ghost	(madness)	aristocrat
	<i>Kinuta</i>	nameless wife→ her ghost	(madness)	nameless husband
demon god	<i>Tanikō</i>	mother→demon god	(demon)	<i>yamabushi</i>
demoness	<i>Kanawa</i>	a certain woman→ demoness	(madness)	diviner
incarna- tion god	<i>Takasago</i>	old man→the god of Sumiyoshi	(god)	shrine priest
	<i>Kazuraki</i>	lowly woman→ the goddess of Kazuraki	(woman)	<i>yamabushi</i>
bodhi- sattva	<i>Taema</i>	nun→Chūjō-hime(Bodhi- sattva of song and dance)	(demon)	priest
ghost	<i>Michimori</i>	old fisherman→ Taira no Michimori	(man)	priest
	<i>Izutsu</i>	country woman→ daughter of Ki no Aritsune	(woman)	priest
<i>tengu</i>	<i>Dai-e</i>	mountain priest→ the <i>tengu</i> Tarōbō	(demon)	priest
demon god	<i>Nomori</i>	old man→demon god of hell	(demon)	<i>yamabushi</i>
demoness	<i>Dōjō-ji</i>	dancing girl→demoness in body of snake	(madness)	priest

ghostly	<i>Ama</i>	ghost of fisherwoman→	(demon)	chief retainer
buddha		dragon goddess		
ghost	<i>Aoi no Ue</i>	the Lady Rokujō→	(madness)	exorcist
		demoness		
demon	<i>Ukai</i>	cormorant fisherman	(demon)	priest
		→demon of hell		
transformation	<i>Kuro-zuka</i>	solitary woman→	(demon)	<i>yamabushi</i>
demoness		demoness		
angry	<i>Tsuchi-gumo</i>	body of priest→	(demon)	warrior
ghost		spirit of ground spider		
animal	<i>Sesshōseki</i>	country woman→	(demon)	traveler
		bewitching fox		

## VARIETIES OF MADNESS

In considering the five subjects around which a program is structured, I am puzzled by one thing. If the god represents heaven above, the demon, the earth below, and the warrior and the woman the human beings in between, then the heaven-earth-man principle is realized. Thus, in order to establish a fifth category according to the Five-Elements Theory, a separate one for madness was added. If the mad character is included merely to add dramatic interest, however, then does this category not occupy a disproportionately important position?

In ancient times it was thought that all madness was caused by possession, but in modern psychiatry the insane person is considered to be mentally ill, a human being in an extreme state or even rapture. Interestingly enough, the treatment of madness in Noh corresponds to this modern understanding. Moreover, this was Zcami's view of madness, and in *Kadensho: Madness*, he writes that it is easy to play madness caused by possession, but more difficult to play madness originating in the mind because an understanding of its causes is necessary. In my opinion, he recognized the value of madness as it occurred in the Middle Ages, understood humanity to be made up of men and women both in normal states and in states of madness transcending that, and attempted in his plays to depict detailed cross-sections of this. There are historians in the Orient who tell us that insanity is the only sane response to insane times and philosophers who say that the insane can see nothingness and that religion (Bud-

dhism) is nothing more than a delusion distracting us from that Zenlike nothingness. If this is true, then perhaps Zeami tried to evoke, through the mad character, that state of nothingness unattainable even if one has faith. In fact, quite a number of the plays with mad main characters are thought to be the work of Zeami. This may help to shed light on the important consideration madness is given in Noh. In *Kyōgen*, by contrast, we find comically lovelorn but no truly mad characters, and this shows that insanity had no place in Japanese humor. The varieties of madness seen in Noh are shown in Table 5; the titles of representative plays appear in parentheses.

It may be possible to use modern labels for the madness displayed in these plays: manic-depression in *Sumida-gawa* for the grief-crazed mother who has lost her son and dances insanely; severe hysteria for the discarded wife in *Kanawa* who commits rash acts in the rages of jealousy; schizophrenia for the shrine maiden who is possessed by a god and follows its instructions in *Makiginu*; complicated mental

Table 5. Madness in Noh

struck mad by over- refined sensibilities*	play-induced madness	play to exhaustion	( <i>Kagetsu</i> )
	poetry-induced madness	overcome by excessive elegance	( <i>Mii-dera</i> )
emotional†	grief-induced madness	extreme of grief	( <i>Sumida-gawa</i> )
	love-induced madness	violent emotions of love	( <i>Hanjo</i> )
	longing induced madness	deluded by longing	( <i>Kashiwa- zaki</i> )
	jealousy-induced madness	explosion of jealousy	( <i>Kanawa</i> )
possession	possession by god		( <i>Makiginu</i> )
feigned	feigned insanity		( <i>Hana-gatami</i> )
true	congenital insanity		( <i>Semimaru</i> )

NOTES: In contrast to feigned madness, all other types are called true madness.

\* A state of rapture approaching derangement, brought on by a frenzy of singing and dancing. The mind is completely blank.

† Emotional madness, brought about by a explosion of violent feelings.

illness, true neurosis, and then hallucinations brought on by the feigning of madness for Teruhinomae, who feigns insanity to regain the love of a man in *Hana-gatami*; brain damage for the Princess Sakagami in *Semimaru*.

These are not the only forms in which madness occurs in Noh. One is told that, clinically, fantasy itself is considered a psychiatrically pathological state, so the dramatic form of the whole group of plays called Phantasmal (*mugen*) Noh, which will be discussed below, could be seen as a way of illuminating a normal life from the perspective of madness. None of the main characters in Phantasmal Noh, however, are deranged.

## GHOSTS AND SPIRITS

Most people immediately associate Noh with ghosts, which, in one sense, are as important as the mad characters. We tend to think of all the different ghosts, goblins, specters, and apparitions under the category of spirits, but in Noh such a variety of ethereal beings appears that unless we distinguish among them there is a danger of our understanding of the plays becoming hopelessly muddled. The chart that follows (Table 6) attempts to show how they are related. The great folklorist Kunio Yanagita has distinguished between ghosts that can appear to anyone and spirits that must appear to a certain person in his *Yōkai Dangi*. This distinction is appropriate for a study of folklore but not necessarily for Noh, because in Noh the ghosts are not the one-eyed, long-necked spooks of popular ghost tales but rather apparitions of the dead or transfigurations of nonhuman beings into human form, and they always come with some purpose.

One Western scholar has observed that Noh is full of ghosts whose psychology is surprisingly sophisticated; that there are some that correspond to Western spiritualistic ideas; and that this unique characteristic is what makes Noh a universal art of interest to the whole world. Indeed, it does seem that the ghosts in Noh are both animistic and spiritual.

As the table of types of characters (Table 4) shows, there are three ways in which a ghost may appear in a play: (1) as a ghost in both



acts; (2) as a human in the first act, and a ghost in the second; (3) as an incarnation in the first act, and a ghost in the second.

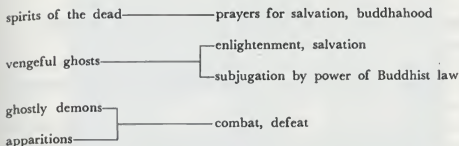
The different types of ghosts and spirits shown in Table 6 range from godly (at the top) to demonic (at the bottom).

Table 6. Ghosts in Noh

gods ↑		
animistic ghosts	— <i>Taema</i> — <i>Yugyō Yanagi</i>	(sentient) — (non-sentient — dance to Buddha
ghosts of dead	— <i>Michimori</i> — <i>Izutsu</i> — <i>Ukai</i>	ghost of dead showing agony of battle ghost of dead showing love, longing, and dance in human life ghost of dead showing state of hell
possessing ghosts	— <i>Makiginu</i> — <i>Aoi no Ue</i> — <i>Sotoba Komachi</i>	(god) sacred ghost possesses human (living) ghost of living person separates itself from body to possess another living person (dead) ghost of dead possess living
vengeful ghosts	— <i>Kanawa</i> — <i>Funa Benkei</i>	(living) malevolent ghost of living person attacks living person (dead) malevolent ghost of dead attacks living person
↓ demons		

NOTE: The first two categories, animistic spirits and ghosts of the dead, are in no way malevolent. Excluded here are demons from the underworld and apparitions.

In Noh there is poetic justice, a judgment against evil within the play, but it does not take the form of clear reward for good and punishment for evil because there are no characters that are innately evil. The final disposition of ghosts and spirits is usually as shown in Table 7. For the first two types, it would perhaps be more appropriate to say the granting of forgiveness.

**Table 7. Final Disposition of Ghosts**

### SOME TYPICAL *Shite*, FROM DEITIES TO DEMONS

A description of the main characters of plays in each of the five subject categories would give a vivid picture of just what Noh attempts to do with each image, but as space does not permit a detailed discussion of all of them, I have selected a number of particularly important figures that seem representative of their respective types of plays. I will list the name of the character, the theme it embodies, and the play or plays in which it appears, and then try to explain the interrelation of character and play.

Of the many kinds of characters, I would like to draw your attention particularly to the great variety of female characters that appear, a good indication of the aesthetic nature of Noh. In their longing for love, envious hate, derangement, or elegant sparseness, they express everything from the beauty of youth to the empty nostalgia of old age. Although Noh has traditionally been performed only by men, a woman is the main character in a great number of plays. Male Noh actors never attempt the kind of female impersonation that is seen in Kabuki—they never use falsetto voices or a mincing walk. The basic acting technique is the same for all roles, and for female roles the performance must be more powerful, yet more restrained, than for the rougher roles of warriors or demons. In Noh, only the mask and robe indicate that the character is a woman, and

the objective is not to play femininity but to express the woman's state of heart and mind.

### **Old Man and Woman of Takasago/The God of Sumiyoshi**

(Appearance of a god)

*Takasago* In this play a typical old couple close to godliness and then a dashing young god appear, symbolizing a sense of good fortune and majesty.

The *waki* appears as a Shinto priest from a shrine in Kyushu, in southern Japan, and explains that he is on his way to the capital (Kyoto) and has stopped en route at the bay of Takasago. After the scene has been set in rich poetic language, an old couple appear, raking the ground clean under a majestic pine tree. He asks them many things and after long passages about the pine they reveal that actually they are not human beings but the twin spirits of two pine trees, one at Takasago and one at Sumiyoshi, after which they board a small boat on the beach and sail off to the other side of the bay. At high tide the priest sets sail and crosses over to Sumiyoshi. He is waiting there when the god of Sumiyoshi (see Fig. 6) appears from amidst the waves and dances a dance of good fortune.

A play in the *waki* category does not strive for dramatic interest in the way plays in the other categories do; rather, its major significance is as a preparatory (*jo*) piece, continuing the sacred mood of *Okina* as it tells a tale about a god. It creates a feeling of purity and felicity, and each character appearing in *Takasago* is representative of those qualities.

### **Minamoto no Yoshitsune**

(Valour in victorious battle)

*Yashima* Typical of the *kachi-shura*, winning-battle pieces, this play celebrates valor in victory with a story of military bravery at Yashima by Yoshitsune, a legend in his day, in the great war between the rival houses of Minamoto (Genji) and Taira (Heike).

A priest on a pilgrimage to the west arrives at the Bay of Yashima, where he encounters an old fisherman. The priest asks him about the famous battle that took place years ago between the Minamoto and the Taira, and the fisherman responds with many tales. Suspicious that



12. The ghost of Minamoto no Yoshitsune (Yashima).

the old man knows so much, the priest asks his name—and at that the fisherman disappears. Soon night falls and the ghost of Yoshitsune suddenly appears in the priest's dream and relates in narrative form the story of the lost bow. (In this famous incident in *Tales of the Heike*, Yoshitsune rides his horse into the sea to retrieve his precious bow and keep it from falling into the hands of the enemy.) The ghost shows how even now he is engaged in battle (Fig. 12), covered with mud and blood, with his rival, Taira no Noritsune, but the scene of the terrible confrontation between the two clans disappears with the coming of dawn. This is the typical form taken by the three winning battle plays. The other two are *Tamura*, which tells of the exploits on the battlefield and devotion to Kannon (the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara) of its hero, Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, and *Ebira*, which tells how the hero Kajiwaru Genta Kagesue broke a spray of blossoms from a plum tree and wore it into battle stuck in his quiver (*ebira*).



13. *The ghosts of Taira no Michimori and Kozaisho no Tsubone (Michimori).*

### **Taira no Michimori**

(The pathos of defeat)

*Michimori* In contrast to the winning-battle plays, the losing-battle plays (*make-shura*) depict the agony and pathos of the defeated warrior. Michimori, nephew of Taira no Kiyomori and one of the elite young generals of the Heike nobility, is wed to Kozaisho no Tsubone but soon after dies at the battle of Ichinotani. Hearing the news, Tsubone follows him in death by drowning herself.

A priest spending the summer at Naruto in the province of Awa is out on the rocky beach one night reciting the sutras when an old fisherman and his wife appear in a boat (Fig. 13). The priest, on the pretext of taking a rest from the difficult language of the sutras, engages them in conversation. They tell of Tsubone's drowning then disappear across the waves. The priest prays for them, and then the ghosts of the dead Michimori and Tsubone appear and describe the battle at Ichinotani. In the end, they attain buddhahood. This human image of a world filled with indescribable sorrow is

perhaps the best of the losing-battle pieces, splendidly depicting a complicated interweaving of life and death around a center of love.

### **Rokujō no Miyasudokoro (the Lady Rokujō)**

(*Yūgen* and the wrath of a living ghost)

*Nonomiya* and *Aoi no Ue* In the many Noh based on *The Tale of Genji*, one character shown in particular detail is Rokujō no Miyasudokoro, the Lady of the Sixth Ward, who appears in *Nonomiya*. She casts her dark shadow in the plays *Hajitomi* and *Yūgao* and is the main character in the fourth category play *Aoi no Ue*, where she is transformed by jealousy into a demon.

The Rokujō in *Nonomiya*, drowned in the pathos of lost love when Genji, the "shining Prince" turns his affections to the young Aoi no Ue, evokes the elegant mystery of *yūgen* mixed with the lonely sadness of autumn; the play draws the audience into a world of fantasy with its medieval favoring of the nobility and the richly poetic expression of Buddhist thought.

A traveling priest who has come to the capital for sightseeing arrives at Nonomiya. A country woman appears, tells him that this was the place where long ago the young Genji visited Rokujō no Miyasudokoro, and relates that sad story of stolen love. She confesses that actually she is that pathetic woman and then disappears among the trees in the evening shadows. As the priest is reciting prayers for the repose of her soul, suddenly the spirit of the dead Rokujō appears in the robes of a lady of the palace and tells about the humiliation she endured when her carriage was jostled aside by that of her rival in love at the Kamo Festival; she pleads tearfully that she wants to be awakened from delusion and finally regains her senses, dances a dance that evokes memories of the days of splendor, and disappears with the dawn.

The mood of this character of pitiful yet graceful elegance is a manifestation of *yūgen*-beauty itself, and it is the model of the physical style sought in all the "wig" pieces. As Zeami says (in *Kakyō: Concerning the Sphere of Yūgen*), "The simply beautiful gentle image, this is the true image of *yūgen*."

Rokujō also appears in the play *Aoi no Ue*, where she embodies the theme of the vengefulness of women. She expresses the searing



14. *The living ghost of Rokujō no Miyasudokoro (Aoi no Ue).*

experience of a woman of noble standing who suffers a raging inner battle of love versus hatred and is finally transformed into a living ghost, seeking perpetual revenge on her rival in love.

The play opens when a retainer comes on stage. Unable to endure the sight of Genji's lover Aoi no Ue being tormented by an evil spirit, he has called in a sorceress. They are all startled when the living ghost of Rokujō appears (Fig. 14)—burning with jealousy over the loss of Genji—and unleashes a stream of pure hatred. Working herself into a frenzy, she attacks Aoi no Ue with her fan and tries to drag her away. The retainer sends for the holy man Yokawa no Ko-hijiri to have him exorcize the vengeful ghost. Then the living ghost appears as a horned demon and does violent battle with the holy man. The power of the demon is not equal to the power of the Buddha, however, and the evil spirit is finally subdued, and, its raging violent emotions quelled, the ghost attains enlightenment and enters Nirvana.



15. *The young Komachi* (Sōshi-arai Komachi).

### Ono no Komachi

(Proud young beauty and ruined old woman)

*Sōshi-arai Komachi*, *Seki-dera Komachi*, *Ōmu Komachi*, *Kayoi Komachi*, *Sotoba Komachi* Another important heroine is Ono no Komachi. A major figure in Japanese literature, Komachi was a Heian court poet of great wit and beauty around whose life has grown a great body of legend. She appears in five Noh plays, not only as the proud and talented young beauty but also as a ruined old woman who looks back on the past with ironic bitterness, regretting the arrogance that prevented happiness in love.

The young Komachi (Fig. 15) is the subject of *Sōshi-arai Komachi* (*Komachi Washing the Page*). The courtier Ōtomo no Kuronushi is chosen to compete against Komachi at an Imperial poetry contest, but, because he can never hope to best her, he and his servant steal into her quarters, eavesdrop while she recites the poem she has prepared for



the contest, and then write her poem into a copy of a famous poetry anthology, the *Man'yōshū*. On the day of the contest, when Komachi's poem is presented, Ōtomo produces the anthology and insists that Komachi has committed plagiarism, causing her great humiliation. She sees through their trick, however, and requests permission to wash the page of the anthology. The ink so recently brushed on is easily washed off. Kuronushi, mortified, declares that he will commit suicide, but Komachi persuades him not to, then rejoices and dances in praise of the virtues of poetry. This piece, which links Komachi's young days to literature and celebrates human compassion, is unusual among the woman plays characterized by *yūgen* in that the depiction of the story is quite realistic.

*Seki-dera Komachi* is one of the three great plays about old women. (The other two are *Obasute* and *Higaki*.) This play enjoys the loftiest position in Noh and the teaching of it is a secret tradition of the very highest order. In certain schools of Noh, Komachi is considered particularly important and the label the Three Old Woman Plays is applied to this play, *Sotoba Komachi*, and *Ōmu Komachi*. It is a third category wig-piece Noh, and the character appears in the special old woman's wig (*uba-katsura*) of white hair and the old woman's (*uba*) mask.

One summer, on the day of the Tanabata Festival, a priest of the temple Seki-dera calls on an old lady who has long lived nearby and is said to know a great deal about poetry. From the level of the language of her poem-*tales* he realizes that she must be the great Komachi, now in a decrepit state. Overwhelmed with pity, the priest consoles her, brings her along to the festival celebrations just beginning at the temple, and urges her to dance. Now over a hundred years old, Komachi dances a few tottering steps, but as she dances she grows sad at her present condition and sinks into a deep melancholy. With the chiming of the dawn bell at the temple, the old Komachi is overcome with shame at herself and hobbles back to her lonely hut, leaning on her stick. This is a Phenomenal Noh that expresses quite realistically, through the figure of the aged Komachi, the unending nostalgic feelings and the cruel confrontation with the reality of decrepitude that occur at the end of life.

*Ōmu Komachi* (*Komachi Parroting*) also presents the image of the

aged Komachi longing for the past. A retired Emperor who had ruled in Komachi's days at court sends her a poem to offer comfort. She immediately replies with a poem that parrots the emperor's, changing only one syllable of the original thirty-one, showing that she has not lost her talent. Then, at the request of the messenger, she dances in remembrance of the past. This piece depicts the elegant play and the playful elegance of youth, not forgotten despite the rigors of old age.

There are also two fourth category Noh in which Komachi appears. In *Kayoi Komachi* (*Komachi and the Visiting*), she is the companion of the *shite*, Fukakusa no Shōshō, who courted Komachi unsuccessfully. A priest is spending the summer in Yase, north of the capital, and every day a country woman brings him firewood and fruit. Often when he asks her name she replies, "Ono no Komachi of Ichiwarano," and disappears. Thinking this strange, the priest goes out to Ichiwarano and the ghost of the deceased Komachi appears. She is shadowed by the horrible, haggard, angry ghost of Fukakusa, his hair in disarray, who cries out, "Komachi must not attain salvation!" Prompted by the priest, he tells of the suffering and ignominy he endured on the hundred nights of visiting in his former life. Komachi promised that if he would come to call on her for one hundred nights she would give her love, but after braving snow and demons for ninety-nine nights, on the hundredth night he died, his strength spent. In the end, the two attain enlightenment and buddhahood.

There is one contradiction in this play. Komachi is said to have lived more than one hundred years, but her ghost appears not as an old woman but as the peerless young beauty. This contradiction is overcome, however, by something in the play that appeals to the heart: the devotion of a man unable to attain enlightened detachment even in the world of death, and the figure of a woman in desperate flight from him. The two images here express the horrifying malice of which the human being is capable and the capacity for cruelty of a woman toward a man who doggedly follows her about in love.

(The strength of a woman's cruelty and a man's resentment are also treated in two plays mentioned earlier, *Koi no Omoni* and *Aya no Tsuzumi*. In the first, a lowly old gardener falls in love at first sight with a beautiful court lady and suffers the torments of love for



16. *The old Komachi* (Sotoba Komachi).

the unattainable. Hearing of him, the court lady, half in jest, has a heavy parcel made and says that if he will carry it around the garden a hundred or even a thousand times, she will give her love. But the bundle is so heavy that the old man dies in a rage. The lady is regretting her frivolous deed when the ghost of the old man, transformed into a hideous vengeful demon, appears before her and gives vent to his wrath. Finally his heart is comforted and he promises to protect her forever.

In the other play, a similar hero is told that he can win a courtesan's love if he can sound a drum, but the heads of the drum are of soft damask cloth that will produce no sound. Both plays are masterpieces that present the psychology of love in a way we can certainly understand today.)

*Sotoba Komachi* (*Komachi at the Stupa*), the other fourth category play, shows the deranged figure of Komachi as an ugly hag more than a hundred years old who has been reduced to begging (Fig. 16).

One day, wandering about near the Katsura River, she sits to rest on a sacred stone stupa. Some priests discover her there and scold her for defiling the sacred monument, whereupon, far from apologizing, she silences them with characteristic arrogance in a verbal duel on religious doctrine. When they ask her name, however, she seems suddenly deranged by the ugliness of her present self in contrast to the splendor of her youth. Her heart chokes with recollections of the past and suddenly she is possessed by the ghost of Fukakusa no Shōshō—to whom, of the many men surrounding her, she was bound by the most profound karma—and acts out the story of the hundred nights of visiting. Then, just as suddenly, she recovers from the derangement, achieves enlightenment, and enters into the Way of the Buddha. This Phenomenal Noh—with the reenactment of an experience from the past in the form of reversal of self and other as its main subject, and with the added interest of the religious debate between the priests and Komachi, who retains her sharpness even in old age—is particularly dramatic, and it moves us to consider again the brevity of the blossom of life and the heaviness of old age.

### The Mad Woman

(The tragedy of kidnapping)

*Sumida-gawa* In the portrayal of a grief-crazed woman in Noh, the process of her derangement is more important than the plot details of whether she is able to rejoin her lost child or lover. Most plays with this kind of story have a happy ending that leaves the audience with a sense of general well-being, a reflection of the religious nature of Noh, but *Sumida-gawa* is different. A reunion of mother and child at the end is not allowed, making it the most tragic among tragedies.

A boatman is busy ferrying visitors to a Buddhist rite being held on the banks of the Sumida River when a mad woman comes along and asks for a ride. He agrees to ferry her across if she will amuse them with her crazy dancing, but when he perceives that her derangement is the temporary result of some emotional burden, he takes pity on her and allows her to board. During the crossing the woman learns that the people at the rite are praying for a child who died there on the riverbank a year before—her son, Umewaka-maru. With the shock of this news she regains her sanity and falls to the ground weeping inconsolably. Then is she taken to the grave mound,

where she asks them to open the grave to allow her to see her child just once more, and while sutras are being chanted the spirit of the child appears (see Fig. 9), as a phantom. Wanting to be sure it is her child, she reaches for its hand—but there is nothing there, and with the dawning of the day the apparition vanishes. In medieval Japan the tragedy of parent-child separation caused by the kidnapping and selling of children was fairly common, and the grief of the victims of such violence was apparently typical of tragedies of the day. In this play, a scene of the deranged behavior of the mother—who sings and does a fitful dance recalling her long journey to the capital, asking the gulls (“capital birds”) on the river if their townsman, her son, is safe—is placed in the first act in order to heighten the sense of tragedy in the second act, and indeed, it pulls mercilessly at the human heart. From the beginning of the play we know that the ending will be tragic, and the figure of innocence fleetingly crazed reaches across the ages to evoke our pity. Disregarding the standard formula for a madwoman play by coldly denying the reunion of mother and child that everyone hopes for, this play creates an image startling in its defiance of the sanctimonious sense of well-being we might expect. Other Noh about lost children are *Sakura-gawa* and *Hyakuman*.

### **Sano no Genzaemon Tsuneyo**

(The ideal of the warrior)

*Hachi no Ki* The fourth category plays are also known as Miscellaneous (*zatsu*) Noh, and, as the name indicates, quite a variety of characters appear. One of the most important is the figure of the warrior as he appears in the *sewa-mono*, or everyday-life-like Phenomenal plays, and the *genzaigeki-mono*, or dramatic Phenomenal plays. Tsuneyo's way of life, which we might even call the embodiment of the admirable gallantry of the warrior's code, would evoke the sympathy of people of any era.

During a snowstorm a benighted traveling priest seeks lodging at a certain house. The impoverished owner and his wife feed him their rough millet and warm him by making a fire of their three treasured bonsai tress, or *hachi no ki* (Fig. 17). When the priest regains his strength he asks the name of his host, who tells him that he is in fact Sano no Genzaemon Tsuneyo, a warrior who had his lands usurped by kinsmen. He declares that if there should be trouble



17. *Sano no Genzaemon Tsuneyo* (Hachi no Ki).

[for the regent] in Kamakura he would rush there and fight. Later the priest reluctantly departs. On returning to Kamakura, the priest, in reality the regent Hōjō Tokiyori, issues a summons to his troops across the land to test the truth of Tsuneyo's words. When the warrior does indeed arrive, faithful to his vow, Tokiyori grants him both the return of his lost territory and also, in gratitude, three fiefs named for the trees burned to warm the traveling priest, Umeda (Plumfield), Sakurai (Cherry Well), and Matsuida (Pine-Well Field).

Tsuneyo is the image of the ideal warrior of the old days, and today we can see him as a fine man who honors and practices his principles, though perhaps to an extent that seems almost deluded.

Although the mask is very important in Noh, Tsuneyo does not wear one. This play is one of a group called *hita-men* (unmasked) Noh, and the casting off of the sense of illusion that a mask gives heightens the sense of intimacy with the audience and leads us to

anticipate a more dramatic climax. This illustrates the fact that sometimes the existence of a mask can actually hinder the telling of a historical incident with a male hero that takes place in the present time. There are a number of other examples of this, including *Ataka*, with the famous bluffing confrontation between a loyal warrior monk and a border guard, and *Kosode Soga*, a story of the Soga brothers seeking revenge for their father's murder. These plays symbolize a quality of popular theater that is one aspect of Noh.

**Taira no Tomomori, Shizuka Gozen, Minamoto no Yoshitsune, and Musashibō Benkei**

(The typical *kiri* Noh)

*Funa Benkei* In contrast to the way we usually conceive of Noh—as a dramatic form devoted to a quiet elegance evoked by very few characters—*Funa Benkei* fills the stage with characters and comes to a rousing climax. It aims for popular appeal, and it even has two different main characters: a dancing girl of the court in the first act and a vengeful ghost in the second.

Minamoto no Yoshitsune and his party depart from the capital in order to clear up a misunderstanding with the ruler, his elder brother, Yoritomo, and they arrive at Daimotsu Bay in the land of Settsu. Yoshitsune's consort, Shizuka Gozen (see Fig. 91), joins them, but Benkei, the powerful warrior monk who is Yoshitsune's chief retainer, orders her to return to the capital. After an exchange of farewell toasts, she dances and then regretfully departs. The party puts out to sea, but the wind and waves suddenly grow rough and the ghosts of vanquished members of the rival Taira clan appear from the waves. Among them is the vengeful spirit of Tomomori (see Fig. 92), who wants Yoshitsune to drown just as he did. He attacks them, brandishing a halberd, but Benkei drives him off with desperate and fierce incantations, and gradually the ghosts disappear with the falling tide.

A grand spectacle takes place on stage in this play, with Shizuka Gozen (the *shite* in the first act), Tomomori (the *shite* in the second act), Benkei (the *waki*), Yoshitsune (a child actor), and the boatman (a *Kyōgen* actor). This piece is full of Kabuki-like elements: the great dramatic shift from the elegant *yūgen* of Shizuka in the first act to the fierce violence of the wrathful ghost of Tomomori in the second; the participation of Benkei that goes far beyond the usual scope of the



*waki* role; and the special realistic "wave-crest" (*nami-gashira*) music the instrumentalists play to accompany the alarmed cries and heroic efforts of the Kyōgen boatman. Moreover, the angry ghosts do not end up attaining buddhahood as they would in warrior plays; rather than being saved, it is suggested, they have been dispersed and damned to float eternally on the waves, and this ending, symbolic of profound human hatred, indicates a defiant new approach: death is not beatified. This is probably the most frequently performed play in the modern repertoire.

Three of the characters that appear in this play, Yoshitsune, Shizuka Gozen, and Benkei, appear in many others, including *Eboshi-ori*, *Hashi Benkei*, *Yashima*, *Settai*, *Shōzon*, *Ataka*, *Futari Shizuka*, and *Yoshino Shizuka*.

### The Tengu Tarōbō

(Demon magic mocked)

*Dai-e* The long-nosed goblins called *tengu*, despite their majestic appearance, are generally used in Noh as the object of lessons in fables: they flout the Buddha with a surfeit of self-confidence and in the end are made to realize their powerlessness against the force of the Law. Tarōbō in this play is a typical example of a *tengu*, for while he is recognized as a magical creature with supernatural powers, he is depicted with an element of mocking sarcasm. This play is unique among the *tengu* Noh, with its special humor, fairy-tale quality, and lively flavor.

When the play begins, it is understood that Tarōbō once changed himself into a bird and fell from a tree, and a monk from Mount Hiei (*yamabushi* headquarters north of Kyoto) came along and rescued him from children who were teasing him. Tarōbō disguises himself as an ascetic mountain priest (*yamabushi*) and goes to visit the monk at the monastery on Mount Hiei. He announces, "I am calling to express my gratitude for your recent kindness," but the monk does not know what he is talking about. When Tarōbō adds, "It was in the vicinity of Tōboku-in in the capital, you recall. I should be delighted to do whatever you desire in return," the monk finally remembers, but he can think of nothing that he wants. When pressed, he says that he would like to see the Great Service (*dai-e*), that is, the scene of the Buddha preaching on Mount Gridhrakuta. His visitor



tells him, "All right, I will create this scene just as you wish, but remember that this is only an illusion. You must not take it seriously or work yourself into a religious frenzy. Go and wait with your eyes closed in that grove of cedars over there." Then he disappears.

Waiting as he has been instructed to do, the priest finally hears the words of the sermon and of beautiful music wafting through the air. When he opens his eyes, he sees that the place has indeed become the sacred mount, a state of extreme bliss, paradise itself. Then Tarōbō transforms himself into the figure of the Buddha and seats himself on the sacred throne, and the priest, overwhelmed with gratitude for this vision, forgets himself and disobeys the command, offering prayers as he sheds tears of joy. These events soon become known in heaven, and the god Taishakuten (Indra) descends in a fury to punish the many *tengu* involved for their sacrilege in toying with the priest, dispelling their magic and scattering them in all directions. Tarōbō, the chief culprit, is kicked down from the Buddha's throne and, unable to escape, surrenders. He finally manages to hide himself in a cave, thoroughly dejected.

Tarōbō, who dwells on Mount Atago, also appears in the plays *Kuruma-zō* and *Zegai*. There were great *tengu* dwelling on other mountains, too, each with his own special powers—Sōjōbō (Mt. Kurama), Buzenbō (Mt. Hiko), Sagamibō (Mt. Shiramine), Hōkibō (Mt. Daisen), Jirōbō (Mt. Hiei), Saburōbō (Mt. Izuna), and Zenki (Mt. Ōmine)—and they were supposed to maintain contact with one another. There was even a foreign *tengu* of a different color, Zegaibō, a *tengu* king who came to Japan from China. Other plays with *tengu* are *Kurama Tengu* and *Matsuyama Tengu*, but *Kurama Tengu* is unique in having a benevolent *tengu*.

High upon Mount Kurama, in the small dale called Sōjōgadani, lives a powerful *tengu*. It is now cherry-blossom time, and the acolytes of Kurama Temple, among whom is the young Ushiwaka-maru (later Yoshitsune), come up from their quarters to view the flowers. Suddenly a fierce looking *yamabushi* (warrior-priest) comes and sits down among them. All flee in fear except Ushiwaka-maru. The *yamabushi* explains that he is actually the chief *tengu* of the mountain, and, upon hearing Yoshitsune's sad tale, promises to tutor him in the battle arts. Later that night, after the others have gone to sleep, Ushiwaka-maru



18. *The tengu on Mount Kurama* (Kurama Tengu).

steals his way back to the dale, and the great *tengu*, reappearing in his true form (Fig. 18), teaches him the secrets of sword fighting and all other martial disciplines. This is what allows Yoshitsune to become such a great and undefeatable warrior in his later years.

### Demoness

(An archetypal witch)

*Kuro-zuka* (*Adachigahara*) Among the many Noh about demons, the three plays *Kuro-zuka*, *Momiji-gari*, and *Tsuchi-gumo* are considered most suited to the name Monster Pieces, for their demons are true demons in both mind and body. The horrifying plot and the violent action of the second act are quite spectacular and give the plays a certain mass appeal, so much so that they were later adapted for Kabuki and even today are performed frequently.



19. *The demoness of Adachigahara* (Kurozuka).

A traveling priest and his companion are overtaken by darkness at Adachigahara. When they ask for a night's shelter at a nearby hut, the old woman who lives there welcomes them in and, at their request, sings them songs about different kinds of yarn while she spins. Then she goes out to gather firewood, warning them insistently not to look into her bedroom while she is away. Yielding to the temptation of the forbidden, the priest's companion peeks into the room and sees a hair-raising mound of corpses. Horrified, the men flee, but the old woman reappears in her true demonic form and pursues them, trying to destroy them (Fig. 19). Finally, however, she is subdued by the priest's power. The demoness, who probably would have succeeded in her pose as an old woman had her dark secret not been discovered, instantly assumed her true form when she was exposed and sought revenge for the "breach of contract" caused by human curiosity. This image of the demoness shows the depth of karma and of evil that lie dormant in human beings and strikes a chord of horror deep in the hearts of the audience.

This play belongs in two of the special groupings described at the end

of Appendix 2, both the Three Demonesses and the Three Monsters. This is because there are two interpretations of this character: one is that because she wears the Hannya mask, which expresses violent human emotions, is that she is a *saidōfūki* (human heart in demon form), a woman whose extreme loneliness has changed her into a man-eating demon; the other is that she is a *rikidōfūki* (true demon) who disguises itself as a woman and awaits the arrival of hapless travelers.

## TIME AND SPACE IN NOH

### Apposition and Fusion

#### *Ma*: THE SCIENCE OF TIME AND SPACE

Noh is sometimes called the art of *ma*. This word can be translated into English as space, spacing, interval, gap, blank, room, pause, rest, time, timing, or opening. Indeed, the conceptual prescription for this term varies with the speaker. A architect uses it to mean space, a musician to mean time. As an expression of space, *ma* can mean space itself, the dimensions of a space, a unit of space, or the space between two things, as in the words *tokonoma* (alcove), *ma-kazu* (the number of rooms), *ma-bashira* (bay-marking pillars in a building). As an expression of time, *ma* can mean time itself, the interval between two events, rhythm, or timing; we see it in the expressions *tsuka no ma* (a brief moment, lit. one hand's breadth), *ma o motaseru* (to kill time), *ma ga yoi* (to be lucky, lit. *ma*, timing, is good), *ma ga au* (to be in rhythm, lit. the *ma* matches). Of course both understandings of *ma*, as time and as space, are correct. The concept apparently first came from China with the character for it (showing the sun in the middle of an open gate) and was used in reference only to space, but as it evolved in Japanese it came to signify time as well.

In every language there are certain words that are used with different meanings in different contexts without causing any particular confusion. But how can we explain the existence of so many *expressions* in Japanese—*ma o oku* (to leave a space or a pause), *ma-ai o*

*haku* (to gauge the distance or time between two objects or events), *ma-nobi* (stretched or drawn-out *ma*, hence slow or dull)—that incorporate a concept of space and time blended? Is this not evidence that the ancient Japanese, characteristically reshaping something imported from abroad, saw space and time, which had been considered polar opposites, in the same dimension? Because it includes three meanings, time, space, and space-time, the word *ma* at first seems vague, but it is the multiplicity of meanings and at the same time the conciseness of the single word that make *ma* a unique conceptual term, one without parallel in other languages.

The fusion of opposing concepts had great significance for Noh, for it led to the development of a sophisticated dramatic structure called *mugen* Noh. *Mugen* means fantasy, phantasm, vision, or dream. In *mugen* (phantasmal) Noh time is manipulated freely and the bridge portion of the stage is put to full use—overcoming differences in time and space by linking the stage proper to the mirror room (*kagami no ma*) and also serving as a performance area itself. It makes possible a perfectly natural form for the coexistence of opposites, this world and the other world, reality and nonreality.

*Ma* is important not only as an abstract idea but also as a concrete structural element. We tend to regard most compositions as made up of an expressive part and a blank part, in a relationship of apposition that is at the basic level of perception. We see the subject and the background in a picture, or hear the notes and the rests in a piece of music. If this is a *shin*-level composition within the *shin-gyō-sō*



20. Rubin's profiles/cup—which is figure and which is ground? Can we perform a gestalt and see it as a loving cup?

system, then in a *gyō*-level composition the relationship of the complementary elements is somewhat less clear, as in the famous picture of Rubin's vase (Fig. 20): is it two silhouettes or is it a vase?

This is what psychologists call a figure-ground relationship: the

element a viewer sees first is the figure. Needless to say, in such a composition figure and ground are easily reversed, depending on the viewer. Another instance of this is scat singing. Instead of the instruments accompanying the melody of the song, the singer accompanies the melody of the instruments.

Finally we arrive at a composition of the *sō* level, a sophisticated construct in which the expressive part serves to support the blank part. In the most extreme form, the expressive part exists only to give shape to the blank, and it is progressively abbreviated in the process of attainment in order to make it symbolic. The blank part created by the symbolic expressive part is the core of the composition, *ma*, an entity that really exists. In a *gyō* composition the decision regarding the relationship of figure to ground rests with the viewer; in *sō* we seem to return to *shin*: figure and ground are made explicit. The difference, of course, is that in a *sō* level composition the significance is not in the figure but in the ground. This is shown diagrammatically in Table 8.

**Table 8. Figure-Ground and *Shin-Gyō-Sō***

	( <i>shin</i> )	( <i>gyō</i> )	( <i>sō</i> )	
expressive part→	figure→	figure→	ground	(the thing)
		↑ ↓		
blank part→	ground→	ground→	figure	(the <i>ma</i> )

All that is necessary to create *ma* is one post or one person. The Inner Sanctuary of the Grand Shrine at Ise (Fig. 21) is ritually rebuilt every twenty years, and on the old site a Pillar of Truth is erected. It not only symbolizes sacred ground but also composes a space (*ma*) of quiet. In Noh, the principle of having one main character reflects an attempt to create of the stage space, by symbolism, a constantly transmuting, transforming space (*ma*) of action.

Thus the word *ma* is used not to express some vague abstraction but to indicate designed negative time and negative space, with both dimensions and functions. On this premise, let me direct the discussion finally to *ma* as it occurs in expression.

In both East and West there has for some time been a groping toward a notion of true artistic creation in extremes of abbreviation.



21. *The Inner Sanctuary of the Grand Shrine of Ise.*

In Japan, for example, the expression "*Geijutsu to wa, shōryaku nari*" (Art is abbreviation), and in Europe, the famous "Less is more" of Mies van der Rohe. However, neither of these pronouncements approaches in profundity Zeami's statement on acting in *Kakyō: Concerning Single-Mindedness*, "*Senu tokoro ga omoshiroki*" (What [the actor] does *not* do is of interest.) The reason is that Zeami is suggesting implicitly the existence of *ma*. He is saying that Noh acting is a matter of doing just enough to create the *ma* that is a blank space-time where nothing is done, and that *ma* is the core of the expression, where the true interest lies.

One example of this is the *i-guse*, or seated *kuse*. The *kuse* is a narrative song-poem that the *shite* usually dances (*mai-guse*), an important scene that is often the high point in a play. In an *i-guse*, the performer sits at center stage, as still as a rock. To the flow of the choral chanting of the story and the instrumental music he dances only with his heart, going beyond the visual to attain infinite expression. The